

03 – A WEAPON IN THE HANDS OF ...

Romans 6:13 – “And do not present the parts of your bodies to Satan as weapons for wickedness. But present the parts of your bodies to God as weapons for righteousness.”

- ✓ This verse paints an interesting picture! Close your eyes and imagine a battlefield. It's deserted, but there's *weapons* lying on the ground. (There are swords and knives, guns and grenades, planes and tanks.) On each side of the battlefield, stands a warrior. God's on one side: the devil's on the other. (Both are eying the weapons.)
- ✓ Have you got that image? Okay. Now, in your mind, let those weapons turn into people. God and the devil – as warriors – both see *people* as potential weapons.

God Can Use People As “Weapons for Righteousness”

Jeremiah 51:20 – “You are my battle-axe and weapon of war. With you, I'll destroy kingdoms.” (Amp.)

- ✓ Look what He said! “You are my weapon! I'm going to destroy the kingdom of darkness using you, and people *like* you.” (I think most of us would *love* to be used by God that way.) Unfortunately, God isn't the only one who uses people to accomplish His purposes. Satan uses people, too.

Satan Uses People As “Weapons of Wickedness”

- ✓ When I said that ... you may have thought of murderers, thieves, and drug-pushers. But this verse isn't written to murderers, thieves, and drug-pushers. It's written to Christians. He's talking to *believers* when he says ...

Romans 6:13 – “Do not present the parts of your bodies to Satan as weapons for wickedness.”

- ✓ Satan doesn't mind using Christians to do his dirty work. Honestly, I

think he probably *likes* it. If he can use one of God's kids to attack God's kingdom ... well, that's just a bonus!)

- ✓ As Christians, none of us would *ever* say, “Hey Devil! Here I am! Come and use me as a weapon!” No Christian *volunteers* for that job! If Satan wants to use a believer, he's got to *trick* them first.

How Can Satan Use Christians?

a.) By Taking Advantage of Selfishness in Their Lives

- ✓ I said this *last* time: We come into the world with a selfish nature. The new birth was supposed to *fix* that – and it *does*. But it doesn't happen overnight. We're all in the process of eliminating selfishness from our lives.
- ✓ Any area where I'm still selfish, is potentially an area where Satan can use me as a weapon. (If I'm selfish in *business*, he could use me to cheat people. If I'm selfish in my *relationships* ...)

b.) By Getting Them Into Offense

- ✓ When Jesus said, “A house divided against itself can't stand”, the devil was listening. That gave him a strategy! (He knows you'd never *willingly* tear your family apart. Or your church. But if he can get you *offended*, you'll wreak havoc and feel justified in doing it!)

Gal. 5:15 (Amp) – “But if you bite and devour one another [in bickering and strife], be careful, lest you end up destroying your entire assembly.”

- ✓ Think About It: Sinners don't split churches. Offended *Christians* tear up churches. (Churches split from within through strife.)

2 Tim. 2:24 – “In meekness instructing those that set themselves in opposition (get into strife), in the hope that God may grant a change of heart and a turning to the truth, enabling them to escape the devil's trap, where they are caught and held captive, (and) forced to run his errands.”

- ✓ What is that? It's a church member being used as a weapon.

c.) By Making Us Angry Enough to Retaliate

- ✓ When you say, “Nobody is going to treat me like that! I’m going to pay them back!”, Satan picks you up as a weapon.

Characteristics of Divine Love – (Continued)

3.) Love Doesn’t Hurt Others

Romans 13:9-10 – “When you love others, you fulfill what the law has been after all along. The Law Code: Don’t sleep with another person’s spouse, don’t take someone’s life, don’t take what isn’t yours ... and any other ‘don’t’ you can think of – is summed up in this one Commandment ... **Love does no harm to others** ...” (Notice that!)

- ✓ **Love won’t act in a way that would hurt someone else.** This is one area where the love of Christ “constrains” us (or “holds us back”). Love won’t let you hurt people! **When you’re walking in love, you’re always thinking about how your actions will affect the other person.**

1 Thess. 4:1-6 – “To sum up, my brothers, we beg and pray you by the Lord Jesus, that you continue to learn more and more of the life that pleases God, the sort of life we told you about before. You will remember the instructions we gave you then in the name of the Lord Jesus. God’s plan is to make you holy, and that entails first of all a clean cut with sexual immorality. Every one of you should learn to control his body, keeping it pure and treating it with respect, and never regarding it as an instrument for self-gratification, as do pagans with no knowledge of God. **You cannot break this rule without in some way cheating your fellow-men.**”

- ✓ Why do you control your desires? So you don’t hurt people!

4.) Love Doesn’t Retaliate

1 Cor. 6:6 – “One believer goes to court against another believer – and you do it in front of unbelievers! To have such lawsuits at all is a real defeat for you as Christians. **Why not just accept mistreatment and leave**

it at that? It would be **far more honoring to the Lord** to **let yourselves be cheated**, rather than to expose your conflicts publicly before unbelievers.”

- ✓ This is another place where “love constrains us.” Love makes me care more about the unsaved judge who might be turned away from Christ, than I care about how I was mistreated.
- ✓ Most of us don’t have that mindset. Like the world, when we’re hurt, too many times we want to “get even”. But love doesn’t do that. Even if it costs me personally, I’m going to walk in love and honor the Lord. So, what do I do when someone hurts me?

Matt. 7:10 – “You have heard that it’s been said, ‘You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.’ But I say unto you, **love** your **enemies**, **bless** them that **curse** you, **do good** to them that **hate** you, and **pray** for them which despitefully **use** you.”

- ✓ What do we pray for them? “Help them see how wrong they are? Remove them from this jobsite? Let them get fired? Let ‘em die?”

1 Pet. 3:9 (AmpC) – “Never return evil for evil or insult for insult (scolding, tongue-lashing, berating), but on the contrary blessing, **praying for their welfare, happiness, and protection**, and truly pitying and loving them.”

- ✓ “God, make them happy!” That’s the *epitome* of moving in the opposite spirit! You can’t do that in the natural! That takes the love of God! But it’s already been shed abroad in your heart, and you can do it! (Why would God ask us to do this?)

“For know that **you have been called to this**, (why?) **that you may yourselves inherit a blessing.**”

- ✓ So far, we’ve seen Jesus talk about this. And Peter. But what about Paul?

Romans 12:14 – “Bless them which persecute you: bless and curse not ... Repay no one evil for evil ... **Don’t take revenge, dear friends**, but leave it to the wrath of God. After all, Scripture says, **‘I alone have the right to**

take revenge. *I will pay back, says the Lord.” (GW)*

✓ He will! In His time, and in His way. (Keep reading.)

*“Therefore, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink: for **in so doing you heap coals of fire on his head.**”*

- ✓ I read that for years and thought, “All right, God!!! Coals of fire! That’s awesome! Burn his brains out!” But I’d missed the whole point.
- ✓ Strange Scriptures That Perplex the Western Mind – If your fire went out, on one of those cold middle eastern nights, you were in trouble. So, what you’d do is put a special bowl on your head, and walk from camp to camp, looking for some kind soul who would heap coals from *his* fire on *your* head, so you could go back and restart your fire. If someone did that for you, he was your friend for life.
- ✓ Jesus was saying, when you do good to an enemy, you’re “heaping coals” from your fire on his head. You’re showing him the love of God!
- ✓ Unbelievers don’t know what to do with the Love of God! (Their head goes “tilt”!) By showing love, you’re giving God a huge open door into their life, to get them saved. That’s why the verse goes on to say, “*Don’t be overcome by evil; but **overcome evil with good.***”
- ✓ When you return evil for evil, you join it, and *you’re* overcome. But when you move in the opposite spirit – and walk in love – *you* overcome evil.