

# SHAPED2LIVE

## The Warfare of Christianity

### Part 1 – "The warfare within... Our first battleground."

As the above title suggests, we are going to take an in-depth look into the warfare of Christianity. As it is easy to see that we are living in troubling and dangerous days and they are days that if not adequately prepared for and handled, there will be a lot of unnecessary casualties.

In looking at this warfare, I want to pose this question to you. If you are going to get into a fight, is better to first know your opponent or to first know yourself?

I believe that most would say that it is better to study and know your opponent so that you will learn who and what you are dealing with and then look for any weaknesses so that you can develop a plan of attacking and defense.

This does make logical sense. But allow me to make another suggestion. I say that it is better to know yourself first. You can study all that you can about your opponent. But if you do not know yourself, then can you be sure that you can successfully attack and or defend yourself against that opponent?

To help us gain a better understanding of this. Let's look at a few scriptures.

#### **1st Peter 2:11** (Amplified translation)

*"Beloved, I implore you as aliens and strangers and exiles [in this world] to abstain from the sensual urges (the evil desires, the passions of the flesh, your lower nature) that wage war against the soul."*

Notice the instruction that Peter gives. He tells them *"to abstain from sensual urges (the evil desires, the passions of the flesh, your lower nature) that wage war against the soul."* He does not point to Satan, demons, or anything else. Everything that he aims at is something that is within them.

In this passage, Peter uses the term "passions of the flesh." We sometimes hear it in another phrase, "works of the flesh." What are the works of the flesh? One good answer is found in the book of Galatians.

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## **Galatians 5:19-21** (Amplified translation)

*"Now the doings (practices) of the flesh are clear (obvious): they are immorality, impurity, indecency, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger (ill temper), selfishness, divisions (dissensions), party spirit (factions, sects with peculiar opinions, heresies), Envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you beforehand, just as I did previously, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."*

Now, both of these passages can be summed up in the passage of scripture found in the book of 1<sup>st</sup> John.

## **1<sup>st</sup> John 2:15-16** (Amplified translation emphasis added.)

*"Do not love or cherish the world or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him.*

*For all that is in the world--**the lust of the flesh** [craving for sensual gratification] and the **lust of the eyes** [greedy longings of the mind] and **the pride of life** [assurance in one's own resources or in the stability of earthly things]--these do not come from the Father but are from the world [itself]."*

Note that each of these were the first things that Satan tempted the woman with in the Garden of Eden.

## **Genesis 3:4-6** (Amplified translation emphasis added.)

*"But the serpent said to the woman, You shall 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 the difference between good and evil and blessing and calamity.*

*And when the **woman saw that the tree was good (suitable, pleasant) for food and that it was delightful to look at, and a tree to be desired in order to make one wise**, she took of its fruit and ate; and she gave some also to her husband, and he ate."*

Before we start heading down the trail of how the devil made her do it or that the devil tricked her. Understand that she could choose not to listen. Even though tempted she could choose to not eat from the tree. She could choose not to give some to Adam and Adam had the ability and responsibility to choose to obey God and not eat the fruit.

Are you beginning to see how it is more important to know yourself then it is to know your opponent in this warfare? Let's take it a little further and see what James has to tell us.

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**James 1:13-15** (Amplified translation emphasis added.)

*"Let no one say when he is tempted, I am tempted from God; for God is incapable of being tempted by [what is] evil and He Himself tempts no one. But every person is tempted when he is drawn away, enticed and baited by **his own** evil desire (lust, passions).*

*Then the evil desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is fully matured, brings forth death."*

Everything that the enemy brings to each person to tempt them is delivered with an understanding of what that person already has a desire for. That desire, whatever it is can come in many forms, and we will look more closely at this point later in this series.

To begin to bring this all home, let's visit with Paul and peek into the letter that he wrote to the Romans.

**Romans 7:7-25** (Amplified translation emphasis added.)

**Rom 7:7** What then do we conclude? Is the Law identical with sin? Certainly not! Nevertheless, **if it had not been for the Law, I should not have recognized sin or have known its meaning.** [For instance] I would not have known about covetousness [would have had no consciousness of sin or sense of guilt] if the Law had not [repeatedly] said, You shall not covet and have an evil desire [for one thing and another]. [Exod. 20:17; Deut. 5:21.]

**Rom 7:8** But sin, finding opportunity in the commandment [to express itself], got a hold on me and aroused and stimulated all kinds of forbidden desires (lust, covetousness). **For without the Law sin is dead [the sense of it is inactive and a lifeless thing].**

**Rom 7:9** Once I was alive, but quite apart from and unconscious of the Law. But when the commandment came, **sin lived again, and I died (was sentenced by the Law to death).** [Ps. 73:22.]

**Rom 7:10** And the very legal ordinance which was designed and intended to bring life actually proved [to mean to me] death. [Lev. 18:5.]

**Rom 7:11** For sin, seizing the opportunity and getting a hold on me [by taking its incentive] from the commandment, beguiled and entrapped and cheated me, and using it [as a weapon], killed me.

**Rom 7:12** The Law therefore is holy, and [each] commandment is holy and just and good.

**Rom 7:13** Did that which is good then prove fatal [bringing death] to me? Certainly not! **It was sin, working death in me by using this good thing [as a weapon],** in order that through the commandment sin might be shown up clearly to be sin, that the **extreme malignity and immeasurable sinfulness of sin** might plainly appear.

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**Rom 7:14** We know that the Law is spiritual; but I am a creature of the flesh [*carnal, unspiritual*], having been sold into slavery under [*the control of*] sin.

**Rom 7:15** For I do not understand my own actions [*I am baffled, bewildered*]. I do not practice or accomplish what I wish, but I do the very thing that I loathe [*which my moral instinct condemns*].

**Rom 7:16** Now if I do [*habitually*] what is contrary to my desire, [*that means that*] I acknowledge and agree that the Law is good (morally excellent) and that I take sides with it.

**Rom 7:17** However, it is no longer I who do the deed, but the sin [*principle*] which is at home in me and has possession of me.

**Rom 7:18** For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot perform it. [*I have the intention and urge to do what is right, but no power to carry it out.*]

**Rom 7:19** For I fail to practice the good deeds I desire to do, but the evil deeds that I do not desire to do are what I am [*ever*] doing.

**Rom 7:20** Now if I do what I do not desire to do, it is no longer I doing it [*it is not myself that acts*], but the sin [*principle*] which dwells within me [*fixed and operating in my soul*].

**Rom 7:21** So I find it to be a law (rule of action of my being) that when I want to do what is right and good, evil is ever present with me and I am subject to its insistent demands.

**Rom 7:22** For I endorse and delight in the Law of God in my inmost self [*with my new nature*]. [*Ps. 1:2.*]

**Rom 7:23** But I discern in my bodily members [*in the sensitive appetites and wills of the flesh*] a different law (rule of action) at war against the law of my mind (my reason) and making me a prisoner to the law of sin that dwells in my bodily organs [*in the sensitive appetites and wills of the flesh*].

**Rom 7:24** O unhappy and pitiable and wretched man that I am! Who will release and deliver me from [*the shackles of*] this body of death?

**Rom 7:25** O thank God! [*He will!*] through Jesus Christ (the Anointed One) our Lord! So then indeed I, of myself with the mind and heart, serve the Law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

In this passage, Paul makes it plain that there is within each of us a nature that still wars with us for control. It desires to rule over us and even though in Christ this state is not the truth of who we now are in Him. There is still something there that speaks out to us and we at times will want to dance to the music that it is playing.

And yes, you can still be saved and again feel the pull of the tune of the sinful nature being played. But where you once were not able to resist its drawing power you can rejoice that Yeshua the Christ the Anointed One has delivered each of us from "the shackles of this body of death!"

Coming up in part 2 in this series is "**The Enemy, who is he and where did the enemy come from?**"

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