Written by Dr. Ed Nelson. Copyrighted 1976, 1981, 1984 (Revised), 1986, 1988. Published by: The Mile High Evangelist Press, P.O. Box 260268, Denver CO 80226. All rights reserved.

Lesson 10



FACING PROBLEMS AND DANGERS

Many new Christians have the idea: "Now that I am saved, all my problems are over." Nothing could be farther than the truth. Satan hates to see anyone saved, and he has now become your enemy. He wants to defeat you spiritually and keep you from being a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. These are big dangers in your Christian life.

Every Christian must recognize the dangers he will face, and then he will know better how to meet them. It is like traveling on an unfamiliar road and being warned of washouts, detours, and roadblocks. So there are certain obstacles, dangers, and pitfalls which can cause a new Christian to be hindered in his growth in this new life.

God wants us ready to face the dangers. John Bunyan, in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, tells of showing Christian the "armoury" and the equipment to stand against danger.

"The next day they took him and put him into the armoury; where they showed him all manner of furniture, which their Lord had provided for Pilgrims: as sword, shield, helmet, breastplate,

Written by Dr. Ed Nelson. Copyrighted 1976, 1981, 1984 (Revised), 1986, 1988. Published by: The Mile High Evangelist Press, P.O. Box 260268, Denver CO 80226. All rights reserved.

all-prayer and shoes that would not wear out. And there was here enough of this to harness out as many men for the service of their Lord as there be stars in the heaven for multitude."

DANGERS THE CHRISTIAN WILL FACE

You will experience persecution.

Many times this truth seems a strange truth to new Christians. Why would anyone want to persecute someone who wants to live for the Lord and do right? It does sound strange, does it not? But the fact is, that is exactly what will happen. Because you decide to live godly, there will be those who will do all in their power to harass you.

Paul promised it in:

> **2 Timothy 3:12** — *"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."*

Again he promised in

> **Philippians 1:29** — *"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."*

After one is saved there are those who will mock and make fun of the new convert. Sometimes it is a family, or it may be friends, or it can be associates at work. They watch the new Christian and endeavor to discourage him by making fun of him.

Don't ever let this discourage you. Derision of a Christian is to be expected. Jesus promised that believers would face persecution.

> **John 15:19, 20** — *"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you. The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also."*

The Lord Jesus gave the beatitudes in His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3-9). He gave seven blessings to the believer:

1. *"Blessed are the poor in spirit."*
2. *"Blessed are they that mourn."*
3. *"Blessed are the meek."*
4. *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness."*
5. *"Blessed are the merciful."*
6. *"Blessed are the pure in heart."*
7. *"Blessed are the peacemakers."*

Written by Dr. Ed Nelson. Copyrighted 1976, 1981, 1984 (Revised), 1986, 1988. Published by: The Mile High Evangelist Press, P.O. Box 260268, Denver CO 80226. All rights reserved.

Then immediately after announcing these seven blessings, He adds, *"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"* (v. 10). The Lord is saying that the person who walks with Him and receives the first seven blessings can be sure there will be persecution. These blessings are entirely different from anything the world knows. The world would never say, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Neither would the world say, "Blessed are they that mourn." This philosophy is cross-grained to anything the world offers. Therefore, the believer can expect to encounter some persecution because he is living exactly to the world's ideology and philosophy.

The early church experienced persecution.

> **Acts 4:1-3** — *"And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them. Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide."*
>
> **Acts 4:18-21** — *"And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done."*
>
> **Acts 5:41** — *"And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicig that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."*
>
> **Acts 8:1** — *". . . And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles."*

So, you see, the Bible teaches that persecution can be expected in the life of a believer. Often such persecution comes because of ignorance or lack of understanding. The Christian should not allow such persecution to discourage or defeat him.

It will be a normal thing for the unsaved of the world not to understand and to put pressure on us for our faith. The early church faced great trial and persecution with rejoicing, blessing and victory.

> **I Peter 4:14** — *"If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified."*

When loved ones and friends do reproach you for your faith in Jesus Christ, we suggest the following reactions:

1. Have love and understanding.

Written by Dr. Ed Nelson. Copyrighted 1976, 1981, 1984 (Revised), 1986, 1988. Published by: The Mile High Evangelist Press, P.O. Box 260268, Denver CO 80226. All rights reserved.

2. Have a definite concern and burden for them because of their lost condition and their inability to understand.

3. Pray for yourself that you will use good wisdom in the way you treat them and handle the situation.

4. Pray for them with wisdom and concern fore their spiritual condition.

You face an expert enemy.

The Bible teaches there is a personal devil who will do all in his power to defeat us. He will attack us, and he longs to have victory over us.

> **I Peter 5:8** — *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."*

He may come as a roaring lion, or he may come as an angel of light.

> **2 Corinthians 11:14** — *"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."*

When he comes as an angel of light, Satan is using his lying technique to deceive. God's Word says he is the father of lies.

> **John 8:44** — *"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."*

> **Revelation 20:10a** — *"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, . . . "*

Satan is:

1. The god of this world.

   2 Corinthians 4:4 — *"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."*

   As the god of this world, Satan does all in his power to keep folks from hearing and believing the Gospel for salvation. He endeavored to keep you from being saved and will do the same for others.

2. The resister who will fight the believer.

Written by Dr. Ed Nelson. Copyrighted 1976, 1981, 1984 (Revised), 1986, 1988. Published by: The Mile High Evangelist Press, P.O. Box 260268, Denver CO 80226. All rights reserved.

2 Corinthians 2:11 — *"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."*
This verse presents Satan as a cunning fighter, using every technique he can find to defeat the believer.

3. The adversary who accuses the brethren.

Revelation 12:10, 12 — *"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven. Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night . . . for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."*

4. The enemy that opposes all that is of God.

Matthew 13:38, 39 — *". . . but the tares are the children of the wicked one: The enemy that sowed them is the devil . . ."*

Ephesians 6:12 — *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."*

5. The tempter that lures us to sin.

I Thessalonians 3:5 — *"For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labor be in vain."*

Satan will trouble us as long as we live. He works on our minds to influence us. This is the reason we need to have *"the renewing"* of our minds as mentioned in Romans 12:2. To have victory, we must have our minds under the control of the Lord.

Philippians 4:8 is a good rule for us so that we can have mind control:

Philippians 4:8 — *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."*

HOW TO HAVE VICTORY OVER SATAN

James 4:7 — *"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."*

Written by Dr. Ed Nelson. Copyrighted 1976, 1981, 1984 (Revised), 1986, 1988. Published by: The Mile High Evangelist Press, P.O. Box 260268, Denver CO 80226. All rights reserved.

> **I Peter 5:8, 9a** — *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, . . ."*

RESIST! That means to say, "NO!" We can resist him only if we submit to God. We say "NO!" to the devil in the power of the Lord. The idea of resisting is to withstand or stand against. The Greek word for resist is the word from which we get our word antihistamine. An individual has a cold with watering eyes and running nose. He takes a dose of antihistamine. That drug stands against the cold, dries up the tissue, and does not allow the cold to be in control. So it is with us as we meet the devil. We must stand against his attacks.

In any possible temptation or problem we should ask, "Will this please God, or will it please Satan?" In every case, Satan's will is opposite the will of God. Therefore, no born-again child of God should have any question. He should not want to please Satan. We must live to please God and to bring glory to His name.

A Very Important Verse

> **I Corinthians 10:31** — *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."*

Years ago, as a new Christian, I took this as my life verse. If we obey this verse, our problems will be solved concerning Satan's attacks.

You must face a sinful world.

> **I John 2:15-17** — *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the word. And the work passeth away, and the lust thereof" but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."*

Please note that these verses do the following:

1. Command believers not to love the world.

2. State that if a believer loves the world, he does not have the love of the Father in him.

3. Reveal that the "world" is the world system.

The world of which the Bible speaks is not the created world. It is the system of the world that is contrary to the Word of God.

God created the world and declared all that He created was good. When sin entered into the world, immediately Satan went about to destroy all that was moral and good and right. Even the material world is marred by the entrance of sin into the universe. But the Bible word World means more than that. This world is the world created by men; the business world, the educational

Written by Dr. Ed Nelson. Copyrighted 1976, 1981, 1984 (Revised), 1986, 1988. Published by: The Mile High Evangelist Press, P.O. Box 260268, Denver CO 80226. All rights reserved.

world, the societies of the world, the governments of the world, the world civilization, and the manner of life of the world. This is the world system. It is opposed to God, for Satan is the *"god of this world"* (2 Corinthians 4:4). So completely is the world under the control of Satan that 1 John 5:19 states, *"the whole world lieth in wickedness."*

This world system is **the enemy** of the Christian.

> **James 4:4** —*"Ye adulterers and addulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."*

Therefore, you can know that the world system is designed to defeat you in your Christian life. This world makes great demands upon our time and energy. It will get us involved in making money, striving for success, seeking for comfort and security. When these become our chief interests, we will not be happy, victorious, fruitful Christians.

Jesus warned:

> **Luke 21:34** — *"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares."*

We must be on guard against this enemy, the world, and its temptations. We must protect our children and our homes from the influence of the world. We need to obey Romans 12:2 — *"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."*

You face decisions in your Christian life.

1. Decisions Concerning Your Participation in the World

   Today strange things are taking place in the so-called Christian world. There are those who claim to be saved but who go right on living as the world lives. For example, there are certain individuals today who are played up as outstanding Christians, but who play in night clubs on Saturday night and preach in churches on Sunday. Recently, I saw a picture of a well-known sports figure who claims widely to be a Christian; and in the picture, it showed him drinking beer. Later I read in the newspaper that he was being tried for a case of drunken driving. This type of Christianity is alien to the Word of God.

   You will have to decide that you are going to live differently than the world lives, differently than you did before you were saved. This means you will need to make decisions about what is helpful toyour spiritual life and what is a hindrance. I personally believe that a Christian should be outwardly different from the world by:

   a. Not using foul language.

Written by Dr. Ed Nelson. Copyrighted 1976, 1981, 1984 (Revised), 1986, 1988. Published by: The Mile High Evangelist Press, P.O. Box 260268, Denver CO 80226. All rights reserved.

b. Not reading pornographic material.

c. Not participating in, telling, or listening to sensuous, filthy jokes.

d. Not attending Hollywood movies.

e. Not using alcoholic beverages of any kind.

f. Not hurting the body by smoking or the use of drugs.

The above is by no means a complete list. You need to determine that whatever you do will be done to glorify God (I Corinthians 10:31).

2. Decisions About Your Companions

a. Be careful about your companions. They will have a great influence on you.

I Corinthians 15:33 — *"Be not deceived; evil communications* [companions] *corrupt good manners."*

b. Be careful about lifting people above the Lord.

Many times new Christians begin to exalt certain individuals in their thinking. A believer can make a mistake by putting even a good Christian on a pedestal and beginning to look at that individual as a model. You must remember, however, that even the best Christian still has a fleshly nature. He may stumble and fall and really disappoint you.

If you will determine you are going to look only to Jesus, you will find much greater victory in your life.

"Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face;
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace."

— Mrs. Helen H. Lemmuel, 1864 – 1961

You face an enemy within — the flesh.

The "flesh" is that sinful nature that remains with the believer. A child of God has a new nature through the new birth. But he still has the old flesh nature.

Galatians 5:17 —*"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."*

Written by Dr. Ed Nelson. Copyrighted 1976, 1981, 1984 (Revised), 1986, 1988. Published by: The Mile High Evangelist Press, P.O. Box 260268, Denver CO 80226. All rights reserved.

In Galatians 5:19-21 Paul identifies the works of the flesh, and in verses 22 and 23 he identifies the fruit of the Spirit. You and I need to pray and long for the fruit of the Spirit to be manifested in our lives. That fruit is nine-fold: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

These nine aspects of the fruit in the life of the believer can be divided into three sections:

1. Our inner man — love, joy, peace.

2. Our relationship to others — longsuffering, gentleness, goodness.

3. Our relationship to God — faith, meakness, temperance.

Galatians 5:16 instructs us that if we will walk in the Spirit, with this fruit of the Spirit being manifested in our lives, we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

We need to recognize that one of the biggest enemies we face is ourselves and our fleshly desires.

You will meet trials that will test you.

Jesus said, *"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."* **— John 16:33a**

Some new Christians have the idea that when a person accepts Christ, he will not have any more problems. Oh, no! The devil, the world, and the flesh are still active. They will do what they can to stop a believer. Trials, testing, and tribulations **will** come.

What should you do?

1. Realize that God has not forsaken you. He permits testings to come in any life. These testings are to be used to make us stronger.

Remember: Trials should make us better, not bitter.

2. Recognize that God has a purpose in the testings.

   Romans 8:28 — *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."*

3. Rest in the Lord.

   Psalm 37:1 — *"Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity."*

Written by Dr. Ed Nelson. Copyrighted 1976, 1981, 1984 (Revised), 1986, 1988. Published by: The Mile High Evangelist Press, P.O. Box 260268, Denver CO 80226. All rights reserved.

The Lord wants us to trust Him. He stands ready to meet every need. First Peter 5:7 gives excellent advice in this regard: *"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."*

Written by Dr. Ed Nelson. Copyrighted 1976, 1981, 1984 (Revised), 1986, 1988. Published by: The Mile High Evangelist Press, P.O. Box 260268, Denver CO 80226. All rights reserved.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Memorize 1 Peter 5:8. We suggest you also memorize Philippians 1:6.

2. Read First and Second Peter. Please Note references to your spiritual growth under "NOTES" on a separate page.

Answer the following questions in your own words:

1. How did the early church face their persecutions? (Acts 4:13, 18 – 20; 5:41)

_____

_____

2. What should we ask for when we are scoffed at and mocked? (Acts 4:29)

_____

_____

3. What must we do, regardless of the persecution of others? (Acts 5:28, 29)

_____

_____

4. How did Moses endure when he could have looked to men for encouragement? (Hebrews 11:27)

_____

_____

5. To whom should we look for our example? (Hebrews 12:2)

_____

_____

Written by Dr. Ed Nelson. Copyrighted 1976, 1981, 1984 (Revised), 1986, 1988. Published by: The Mile High Evangelist Press, P.O. Box 260268, Denver CO 80226. All rights reserved.

6. In what manner did we walk before we were saved? (Ephesians 2:2)

_____

_____

7. Who has control of this world system? (1 John 5:19; 2 Corinthians 4:4)

_____

_____

8. What are the three main aspects of worldliness? (1 John 2:15, 16)

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

9. What do we need in order to stand against Satan's wiles? (Ephesians 6:11)

_____

_____

10. What word is used three times in Ephesians 6:13, 14 in defense against Satan?

_____

_____

11. Name three important parts of our armor. (Ephesians 6:16, 17)

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Written by Dr. Ed Nelson. Copyrighted 1976, 1981, 1984 (Revised), 1986, 1988. Published by: The Mile High Evangelist Press, P.O. Box 260268, Denver CO 80226. All rights reserved.

12. Briefly list the glorious promises we can claim in the midst of every trial and test.

Hebrews 13:5, 6

_____

_____

1 Corinthians 10:13

_____

_____

James 1:2, 12

_____

_____

Philippians 4:7

_____

_____

1 Peter 1:5 — 7

_____

_____

NOTES

1. A blessing I received each day as I read First and Second Peter:

Day 1 — 1 Peter 1 _____

Day 2 — 1 Peter 2 _____

Day 3 — 1 Peter 3 _____

Day 4 — 1 Peter 4 — 5 _____

Day 5 — 2 Peter 1 _____

Written by Dr. Ed Nelson. Copyrighted 1976, 1981, 1984 (Revised), 1986, 1988. Published by: The Mile High Evangelist Press, P.O. Box 260268, Denver CO 80226. All rights reserved.

Day 6 — 2 Peter 2 _____

Day 7 — 2 Peter 3 _____

2. Below, note all of the references I found in First and Second Peter concerning our spiritual growth:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____