

THE STRONGER ONE · TAKE-HOME

Session 3: Know Your Enemy

Keep this sheet. It is yours, and it is private.

WHAT WE FOUND

We watched two foundational, deliberately contrasted campaigns. In Eden, three moves: fog the Word (“Did God say...?”), deny the death (“You will not die”), slander the Father (“God knows... you will be like God”); and once the wall fell, his occupation policy: shame, hiding, blame. We noticed the most important tactical fact of the war: he never forces; he cannot force the will. In the campaign for our consent his weapon is the lie, which is why the truth disarms it (Scripture also shows permitted affliction, Job above all, always under God’s limits). In the wilderness the same campaign failed: Jesus answered every move from memory, all three swords drawn from Deuteronomy 6-8, Israel’s wilderness manual; and we saw the devil quote Psalm 91, proof that even Scripture in his mouth is bait: test where a voice leads, not how it sounds.

Our standing orders are exact: be sober, be watchful, resist, submit to God first (1 Peter 5:8-9; James 4:7), and never panic, converse, or command. Acts 19:13-16 showed us why commanding is not ours: the sons of Sceva used the right name without being sent, and even St. Michael says only “The Lord rebuke you” (Jude 9). The enemy is real, and on a leash: “the power of Satan is, nonetheless, not infinite” (CCC 395). We left less afraid than we arrived.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. Ignatius of Loyola

Spiritual Exercises, Rules for the Discernment of Spirits (First Week)

St. Ignatius teaches, in substance: the enemy is weak before firm resistance and strong before wavering; like a false lover he demands secrecy, and is undone the moment his whispers are told to a confessor or wise guide; and like a commander besieging a fortress, he strikes where the walls are weakest.

A faithful summary of the First Week rules; not a direct quotation.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. Francis de Sales

Introduction to the Devout Life, Part IV

St. Francis teaches, in substance, that temptation itself, however long or violent, is not sin: the soul is stained only when the will consents. So long as the yes is withheld, the battle honors God. Do not be alarmed at the fierceness of the attack: intensity of temptation is not evidence of defeat. (As spiritual writers like to put it, in our phrasing: the enemy besieges most furiously the city he has not taken.)

A summary of his teaching on temptation in Part IV; not a direct quotation.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. Teresa of Ávila

The Book of Her Life, and her teaching generally

St. Teresa writes, in substance, that devils frighten only souls that hand them the advantage: fear itself is the ground they trade on, and a soul in God’s grace need not be cowed by their threats. Stay close to your Lord, and the terrors shrink to their true size.

A summary of her well-attested teaching; wording varies by translation.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- **Forge your countersword.** Memorize one verse aimed at your recurring lie; write it on a card and carry it. For the fog: 1 Peter 1:25. For the denial: Genesis 4:7. For the slander: Romans 8:32. Jesus fought from memory. So will you.
- **Break one secrecy.** Tell your tell-someone person one whisper you have been keeping private: not necessarily your wall, any whisper. In daylight, this week.
- **Post the watch.** Add the St. Michael prayer to your night prayers this week, prayed as a soldier reporting to the watch commander.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

James 4:7

Before next session: Read Ephesians 6:10-18.

From the Catechism: CCC 391-395; 1673; 2116-2117; 2846-2849.