



06_Spiritual Warfare

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0:00:48.3 Sonja Corbitt: We're talking about spiritual warfare today on the Bible Study Evangelista Show. And I'm Sonja Corbitt, your Catholic evangelista. We spent four weeks on the angels, and last week looking a little bit at the fall of some of the angels, the fallen angels. And today we're gonna pick up on that and talk about spiritual warfare. And again, there's so much information to present, and I don't wanna spend a whole lot of time on this because we don't wanna give the enemy too much attention. But it is very important to have some sort of strategy when we're talking about the enemy in spiritual warfare, particularly because every human being after the fall has been immersed in a spiritual battle, whether they know it or not. And therefore, to refuse to take up certain arms in order to engage in that spiritual battle or that spiritual warfare, it's a sin of omission and negligence. And I find the reticence or the unwillingness of people to even entertain the idea of evil, laughable, particularly Catholics. Because we pray in the, our Father deliver us from evil. And that line actually means deliver us from the evil one or deliver us from the person of Satan. And so whereas Catholics, some Catholics, they sort of mitigate or marginalize or even don't even believe in the demonic, they pray the, our father, and it has that line in it.

0:02:24.4 SC: I don't know. I just don't understand the picking and choosing, particularly when the Bible is so clear, but so is the church. It's a matter of deified of faith that there are fallen angels and there is evil. Just look around you. So I don't wanna preach to the choir here, because I know you wouldn't be listening to this if you didn't believe in them. So I had some difficulty, again, trying to synthesize all of this information, particularly from father Ripperger's book, Dominion, because it is so detailed and so voluminous. We've covered a lot of what he covers. He talks first about Angelology, the nature of angels, their intelligence, their will, the natural law, the hierarchy of the

angels. And then he starts into demonology. And he uses what we know about angels as a springboard, but also his experiences as an exorcist. And I can't imagine that anyone who is battling directly with demons or devils or Satan himself, I'm sure you learn a lot in those sorts of situations and those sorts of conversations even. So he goes into demonology and the psychology of demons. He talks about the structure of their authority and how it's inverted from the hierarchy under which they were created.

0:03:52.8 SC: And he also makes the comment that authority is the number one issue for demons. And I find that very interesting. I'm gonna come back to that at the end of today because I have found that to be true. Besides unforgiveness, authority issues are typically one of the most difficult to confront in a one-on-one consultation. Forgiveness is a block, it's a block to healing. It's a block to spiritual formation and ongoing spiritual formation. And so is this authority issue. Being out from under the proper authority structure in our families, our marriages, churches, all of those areas is not only dangerous, but it causes all kinds of demonic activity in our lives. And so it's a really important topic that I wanna look at today in some detail. But then father Ripperger, he goes on to talk in great detail about diabolic obsession and possession and the signs of those kinds of things, subjection, infestation. And then he goes into methods of combat and he talks about the avoidance of sin and prayer and fasting and mortification, sacraments, the sacramentals, other stuff like that. It's just a voluminous book, and it's impossible to give all of those subjects and topics, or I should say subtopics, the attention that they deserve. So I'm not gonna try.

0:05:34.2 SC: What I'm going to do instead is, first we're gonna just start with acknowledging the enemy. And like I said, I don't wanna preach to the choir here, but the church is pretty clear that we need to at least be aware that we are in a spiritual battle. The entire life on earth here is that kind of battle where we're trying to learn how to love authentically and be loved authentically. That's really the essence of the battle. It's a battle for love. And so many pains and sufferings and the sins of other people start us out on a road of not even believing in love. And so we fight throughout our lives to understand the things that have happened to us, to forgive them. And then we try very hard to understand God and why he would allow pain and suffering. And one of the things... I mentioned this in a previous show. One of the things that I found shocking that father Ripperger comes just right out and says, he says that temptation is good for us. [chuckle] He says that God wouldn't allow it if it weren't good for us. And even possession, when he allows possession, it's for the good of the person in some way, or God would never allow it. And I just find that totally shocking. But ultimately, we have to believe that.

0:07:00.7 SC: If we believe that God is good, and we believe in that goodness, in some measure, even if we're not even sure, Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. Even if we're not sure, but we suspect or we want to believe it, that is one of the most important issues that we wrestle with. How in the world could a good God allow such things? And it all really does come back to the issue of love and learning about love in ourselves, through other people, and with God. But Pope Francis told us that man's life on earth is warfare. And St. John Paul II, he said that spiritual combat is another element of life which needs to be taught anew and proposed once more to all Christians today. It is a secret and interior art, an invisible struggle in which we engage every day against the temptations, the evil suggestions that the Demon tries to plant in our hearts. I believe it was St. Marcian who said that sin is a spirit. Sin is a spirit. And the whole strategy of Satan is to get us to sin because sin separates us from ourselves, from others, and God. And I'm getting way ahead of myself here, but Ripperger says that the very nature of the battle is to engage fallen angels.

0:08:28.7 SC: He says that in the very first sentence of his book, Dominion. And one of the things that we really need to try to determine in when we're talking about a strategy is what exactly are we being tempted in? Most of the time, and I see this a lot now, which is part of why I didn't wanna spend a whole lot of time on spiritual warfare, but I see right now there's this sort of fad where everybody is all about spiritual warfare and deliverance. And so there's a demon lurking behind every bush, and everything is attributed to attacks and demons and all that. And what I discovered this lent, which was somewhat shocking for me, is I needed an illumination in my intellect. I could see that there was an issue in my own life that I was trying to discern what exactly is happening here? And I asked for an illumination of my intellect and a strengthening of my will, and I asked my prayer team to pray that for me because I wanted to understand the essence of the attack that I was under. Is it the world? Is it the flesh? Or is it the devil? And I've said this on the community many times. Two-thirds of that equation is something other than the devil. The world and the flesh are two-thirds of the rootedness of the temptations that beset us and that entrap us.

0:09:57.4 SC: And then there's the devil, that one-third, right? And father Ripperger is... And so is father Regio and Father Blount, our exorcists are really, really plain that our number one enemy is not Satan. It's not the devils. They don't want anything to do with someone who really prays, who truly is seeking God, who has sacramentals in their home, who is frequenting confession, who is in adoration. They don't want anything to do with us. They go as far away from our homes as they possibly can. Now, that's not to say that we don't experience temptation. We do. And we are definitely under attack in the world right now to a degree that I don't think the world has ever seen.

0:10:43.6 SC: It is really, really oppressive right now. The attacks on marriages, on families, on the church, it's just almost overwhelming. It really is. But we can't focus on that. We have to focus on the angels and the fact that there are so many of them who are working to mitigate, first of all, but also to make sure that those things work together for our good. All that happens is meant for our good in one way or another. And that's the part that we really need to focus on, not the devils and which devil it is that's tempting me and what's his name? And how do I rebuke him? And what's my deliverance prayer? We're running to the deliverance prayer book when what we really need to be doing is battling sin. We need to be battling the world and the flesh. That's where we fall the most frequently. And that's, really, the spirit of sin altogether.

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0:12:53.6 SC: So in our lives, in the battle for love, there is an enemy within and an enemy without. And the enemy within comes from that concupiscence, which is the tendency to sin. That's that big church word for the tendency to sin, particularly in pleasure. And we have in the scriptures this sort of formulaic kind of description of the world, the flesh and the devil. And the church tells us that the answer to temptations from the world is self-denial or detachment. Father John Harden in his Bible dictionary defines attachments as an emotional dependence, either of one person on another or of a person on some real or elusory object. And the first condition for progress in holiness or sanctity is some mastery over one's attachments. Now, early on in the Christian life, we start trying to get rid of what I always call the biggie sins. So for me, that was drinking, cussing, smoking, those kinds of big, visible things. And then as we progress in prayer with God, and we work really hard at those attachments, that would actually be for me, most of that was flesh. And the church says that the answer to temptations of the flesh is self-denial or another word for that is mortification or asceticism. It's putting the flesh or the love of pleasure to death. Mortification.

0:14:37.5 SC: So you're putting that carnal... Not the body. The body is good, but the concupiscence of the body, which Paul calls in his writings, the flesh. He uses that as sort of the term for concupiscence, that love of pleasure. So in temptations of the flesh, we have to put to death that love of pleasure. And we do that by mortifying ourselves or practicing asceticism. And that's where St. John of the cross is pretty brutal about it. He says, "You have to put away every single fleshly desire and every single worldly desire, attachment." He is really brutal about that. Every attachment must go. So there are attachments to power and money. Those are sort of worldly attachments, power, fame, and money. And then you have the fleshly attachments, which are food and drink and hot water and comfort and leisure, and the resistance of anything hard, which a battle against the flesh is necessarily hard. And that's why, of course, the church gives us these two penitential seasons of advent and lent to practice some of that on our own so that God doesn't have to lead us into some brutal desert where we have to learn it. Although all of us end up having to do that because none of us wants to learn on our own.

0:16:04.3 SC: So the answer then to temptations of the world and the flesh according to St. Paul and the the New Testament is immediate and repetitive combat. Paul says in Romans 6:11, you must see yourselves as dead to sin, which is there's that idea of mortification, but alive to God in Christ. Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal bodies to make you obey their passions. Do not yield your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but yield yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life and your members to God as instruments of righteousness. Now, get this. For sin will have no dominion over you since you are not under law, but under grace. Now, it's very easy to move from confidence and faith in God that is even heroic into presumption on this matter. Sin will have no dominion over me because I am not under the law but under grace, and over and over and over again throughout the scriptures, it is clear that the whole gospel message is about freedom. Freedom from sin, freedom from the world, freedom from flesh and freedom from the devil in order to be free to serve God fully. That's the point of the freedom. Freedom in ourselves to be everything that God made us to be, and freedom to serve him fully in whatever way He asks at the drop of a hat where we don't have anything that we have to do away with because we're not...

0:17:51.6 SC: We don't have sin clinging to us as the book of Hebrew says, the sin that so easily besets us. Those are predominant faults and those habits of sin. But my point earlier was that two-thirds of our problem with sin is about the world and the flesh. And it's not the devil at all. And most of us who are really working toward holiness, our problem isn't the devil. It's our own flesh and it's the world. And many of us have separated from the world, and yet we have attachments to religious personalities and religious methods and religious things. We have attachments to those. And so God has to work to detach us from that stuff too. Because as soon as we separate ourselves from the world, then we attach ourselves to all of the accoutrements of religion, the people and the stuff, and the methods and the pretties and the sacraments and the novenas, and we start to multiply all of that stuff too. And that is a religious world and a religious flesh that is active. And so God does the work of helping us separate or detach from that stuff, that emotional attachment, and that fleshly attachment to certain things with the desert. That's why the desert is so necessary.

0:19:14.0 SC: So any time you get super emotional about being without something, that's an attachment. It shows you that you are emotionally invested in doing something a certain way with a certain type of thing or a certain person, and it becomes exclusive because that's how we are. And one of the wonderful things about St. John of the cross is that he shows us the stages of prayer in which God does the work of purification for us of these sorts of worldly and fleshly attachments, which in the beginning, we separate ourselves from the worldly world, but then we attach ourselves to things in the religious world. And so we have to work at becoming detached from those things too. And then we have that last third from the world, the flesh, and the devil, we have the devil. And there are certain hallmarks of the devil and his activity in me and in others, in institutions, in the church, in our parishes. If you see deception, if you see division, if you see distraction, if you see discouragement, those are all hallmarks of the devil. He deceives, he divides, he distracts, he discourages. And in fact, he's named these things. He's a liar, he is an accuser, he is belial, which means worthlessness.

0:20:42.9 SC: And he tries to discourage us with this idea of how worthless we are. And it's interesting in Father Ripperger's book, he links acedia to discouragement, which I don't have a whole lot of time, I just wanna mention it. If you want more information on that, you'll need to get his book. But the Bible tells us the answer to winning in temptations. He says... James in 4:7, he says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God and resist the devil, and he will flee from you." So that first part is very important. In temptation, we have to acknowledge that God has allowed it for our merit, he has allowed it for our strengthening, it's not... The devil wants to destroy us. He wants us to fall further into sin. He wants us to solidify the habits that we have in our intellect, in our will, in our flesh, our bodies, he wants us emotionally attached to certain sins so that we continue in them so that we will die in them and take as many people with us as possible. So then he tries to make us fall, but God allows the temptation in order to strengthen us, in order that we can grow in virtue and then merit more grace. The way our lady did, we talked about this last week, he wants us to have the opportunity to advance in both virtue and in grace.

0:22:20.7 SC: Now, I realize that that that's an elementary basic teaching from the church that we can grow in virtue and we can grow in grace. But I don't know about you, I just always thought about that in very small amounts. I never imagined that that's what made our lady so full of grace and so virtuous is that she continued over and over and over through her choices to multiply that virtue and grace. So I brought up the question last week, what is possible? What is possible for you and for me? We should be thinking about that in our temptations because the first part of that verse

says to submit yourselves therefore to God, understanding that God has allowed it. But then resist the devil, and he will flee from you. And one of the things that Father Ripperger says in his book is that we have to have this immediate response of resistance in our intellect and in our will and in our flesh, we have to train ourselves with that immediate response, and we have to do it repetitively over and over and over again until we have trained our flesh to respond in that way. And in the beginning, it is tough. It is really tough, but it becomes easier the more we do it.

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0:25:17.9 SC: What makes Father Ripperger's books so long and so tedious to read is that he is so very precise. He gets down to the joints and the marrow of how the human person is made, how the angels are made, and the combat between the two, or in this case, of spiritual warfare or combat. But also, the help from the good angels, our guardian angels in particular, he is so very precise. And I have come away with an understanding of my own flesh much, much better this lent than I think I ever have before, and realizing that an area of temptation that I had been laboring under is about the flesh and not about the devil. [laughter] And so it's a matter of really disciplining the flesh, which is tough. After... I got out of practice, I'll be honest, I just got out of practice. Self-denial has just been hard, it's been really hard learning temperance and learning self-denial, and it's just so much easier to just completely walk away from something, I can do that easy. I can just not... I can completely abstain from just about anything, but it is much, much harder to be temperate. And temperance is a virtue. So I've been trying very hard to build that virtue in my life, and it requires self denial and I have failed more than I have succeeded, but I am making progress, thanks be to God.

0:26:52.5 SC: And it's a little depressing, to be honest, it's a little depressing, but it is what it is, and it is the battle, and I'm in. So it's important for us to know the strategies of the devil. So his whole spirit is that of sin. Sin is more of an enemy to you than the devil is, is my point. Sin is more of your enemy than the devil because most of us know something about his strategies to deceive and divide and distract and discourage. We know that. We know at some point, we sort of come to realize what is an attack and what isn't, when it's... Especially when it's very strong and very sudden, we start to

kinda get a clue over time, but we don't always think of sin, venial sin, I mean. Most of us have given up mortal sin, or many of us have given up mortal sin, but still struggle with venial sins.

0:27:51.5 SC: And so sin is our ultimate enemy, that's my point. Sin is what we really need to build a strategy for so that we're not deceived and were not divided, and we're not distracted and we're not discouraged. Because falling into sin as a habit, there's nothing more depressing. There really is nothing more depressing than being caught and enslaved in sin, and yet periodically, we all find ourselves there. There's a quote by Augustine that I find really interesting. He says that to prevent the sheep from seeking assistance by her cries, the wolf seizes her by the neck and thus securely carries her away and devours her. The devil acts in a similar manner with the sheep of Jesus Christ. After having induced them to yield to sin, he seizes them by the throat that they may not confess their guilt, and thus he securely brings them to hell. I don't know, that's a little bit terrifying to me. So confess, confess it all.

0:28:51.5 SC: Run to confession and just be bald-faced honest about where you are in the spiritual life and receive the healing of that sacrament for yourself. Pope Benedict XVI called us all common exorcists. He said, [chuckle] the Christian can see that his task as exorcist must regain the importance it had when the faith was at the beginning. Of course, the word exorcism must not be understood here in its technical sense, it simply refers to the attitude of faith as a whole, which overcomes the world and casts out the prince of this world. In unity with Jesus and with fear of God, the devil is easily defeated. So in unity with Jesus and with fear of God, meaning that ultimate respect, that sin will be... It carries its own punishment. It will be punished. You're not gonna get away with it. You're going to be sorry. You're going to be sorry. One of the things that Father Ripperger points out is that when the enemy places a sort of temptation in our minds, he gives us a thought and then he pulls up an image in our memory to associate with it, and he pulls up a good image. He'll pull up a good image from your memory, and this is actually why you should be very careful about what you allow into your memory, into your mind, what you see and look at and listen to.

0:30:15.4 SC: Because the enemy will bring up an image and connect it to a thought and kinda just let it marinate there and see what you'll do with it. And if you have trained your mind and your emotions and your body to associate certain thoughts and memories with an emotions, with sin, good ones, let's say. Good emotions, good physical feelings, good thoughts with a particular sin, by a habit of sin, then you're going to fall much more quickly and much more easily to that sort of placement of thought and memory. And so that's why it's so important that we immediately combat those sorts of deceptions in thoughts and in memories by associating something sinful with something good. That's how they deceive us into sinning. And if we train our flesh and we train our thoughts against or away from that, and instead think about the detriments of sin, think about what's going to happen for sure if you commit that sin. First of all, you're gonna be set back even more, it's gonna be even harder when you finally do have to turn from it because you're gonna destroy yourself or somebody else if you don't. When you finally do have to turn away from it, it's going to be so much harder and wouldn't it just be easier to just go ahead and do it now, practice those little self-denials. Now, what I have found in temptations is that this authority issue is really, really important here.

0:32:00.8 SC: If you can somehow submit your will to God's authority, either through his word or through someone who's in authority over you, it does something. It's very, very powerful to be in the right authority in your relationships. And somehow, I don't know, it's like a super power in the

spiritual realm, being in the right structure of authority. And so when we're talking about temptations and we're talking about how the enemy comes against us, we have to realize, first of all, that our flesh and the world make up two-thirds of that, and he is really only the other third. But he uses those other two things against us, and so we kinda lump it all into one. But the Scriptures tell us that we should submit ourselves to God, realizing that the temptation is actually meant to help us and then resist the devil and he will flee from us. There's a Bridget of Sweden quote on this point that I like a lot. She says, "Although the devil lost the dignity of his previous rank, he did not lose his knowledge, which he possesses for the testing of the good and for his own confusion." For his own confusion, I thought this was interesting because Father Ripperger says that by fighting demons and vanquishing them, the demons become weaker, not only in the lives of the individual who fight them, but in the lives of other people as well.

0:33:29.4 SC: So you're not just fighting for you, you're fighting for everybody who has this particular tendency to sin. I thought that was crazy. And here it was echoed by Bridget of Sweden, for his own confusion, he... Father Ripperger talks about how we weaken the demons and we humiliate them when we win these battles by grace in Christ. Now, how do we do that? Well, there is a strategy that Augustine put forward that I really like. It's pretty simple, whereas Father Ripperger's is just so involved and so precise and so detailed. So I'm gonna kinda go with Saint Augustine because he outlined the three stages in the pattern of sin. And if we know this pattern, then we can discern its subtlety because that's one of the things that we have to be careful of is the deception of the enemy. And the first stage is suggestion. Temptation often does come from the devil, but sometimes we just decide to do the thing. Sometimes we just have a craving or we're hungry or angry or lonely or tired, and in a weak moment, just decide to do the thing, whatever it is. Either way, the gateway to sin is a thought. It's a suggestion of something attractive, something that you already desire. That's a nature of sin that we don't always think of.

0:34:55.5 SC: It comes from something that we already desire, it comes from within us. The book of James chapter 1, verse 13 says, "Let no one say when he is tempted, I am tempted by God, for God cannot be tempted by evil nor does he himself tempt anyone, but each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and sin when it is full grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, beloved brethren." So what we see there is it's our desires that need to be schooled and need to be disciplined. What do I desire? What is it in the temptation that I'm actually desiring? What is it in the self-medication that I'm actually desiring? That's the desire that we take to God. Notice please that it always starts with a suggestion.

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0:36:27.4 SC: St. Augustine's three stages of sin are suggestion, pleasure, and consent. So the

suggestion always seems to come from inside rather than outside. Because if it came from outside, you would be able to easily discern that it is a temptation. So the enemy doesn't say, nobody cares about you, you'll feel better, you deserve it. He doesn't say that. Instead, he says, nobody cares about me, I'm so lonely, I can't help it, I deserve it. So the story of the fall is presented to us in third person, but notice how in your own life, the suggestion always enters your mind as though it comes from inside yourself, and that is in order to conceal the deceit of where it's actually coming from. Rather than you should do this, we're thinking, I should do this. And at this point, St. Augustine says, there's no sin in that. No matter how dangerous the suggestion it is or where it comes from, it's just a thought. And we have control over our thoughts to make them obey Christ, according to Paul in 2 Corinthians 10:5. So we might have insistent thoughts, they might be intrusive, we might almost even obsess over them, but remember that temptation only lasts a short while at a time, and if we resist, he will flee. And notice the lies and the half truths.

0:38:00.0 SC: Nobody cares or nobody cares about me. These thoughts are the entry point of temptation. They're the place and the time to stand firm immediately. According to every exorcist and every church father and every teacher on spiritual formation and issues, this is the place to stand firm because the Bible says if we just ignore it or if we counter the thoughts, they'll go away. And father Ripperger actually even adds that we can distract ourselves with something else, which I found interesting because that's one of the strategies on the anxiety checklist and it works for everything. We're supposed to be thinking, our thoughts are supposed to be on what is good and noble and beautiful and trustworthy according to Philippians. So if we're thinking about that, we don't have any room for the other stuff, the desires and the suggestions and the thoughts. The negative thoughts. So if we ignore those thoughts, they'll just go away. And this is where Jesus resisted temptation. He did it immediately. The longer we entertain the thoughts, the more the flesh is engaged, the more the will is engaged. The lower faculties of the human person are waiting to hear from the will, the intellect about what to do. And so the longer the thought sits there, the more it's gonna gravitate toward the flesh and not toward what the intellect and the will know and want.

0:39:25.9 SC: The second stage, according to Augustine, is pleasure. Instead of ignoring the thought of the fruit, whatever it was, Eve started to carry on a conversation with the serpent and she starts to try to justify and ruminate on what he has suggested. Exorcists tell us that nobody should ever dialogue with Satan 'cause he's too smart and he'll confuse us into submission. But if you'll think about the fall, notice how he massages the suggestion to Eve. He counters her arguments until he's convinced her. And her flesh is drawn to that suggestion and it experiences a certain pleasure in it. So while you're thinking about the thing that the suggestion is offering, you start to feel some sort of pleasure in it. And that's where your will then is starting to be pulled. And all of this conversation for us is internal. It's interior and there's still no sin yet because the will hasn't consented. But you can already see how the will is starting to follow the pleasure of it and the thinking about it, the justification and the marginalization of how small this would be, or how it's not really gonna hurt anybody or nobody's ever gonna find out. All of that stuff takes place interiorly.

0:40:42.6 SC: St. Augustine says that consent is the final stage. If the will withholds acquiescence or agreement, combats the temptation and repels it, it has scored a success and performed a highly meritorious act. If, on the contrary, the will delights in the pleasure, willingly enjoys it and consents to it, then the sin is committed. And that's whether or not it's actually physically followed through with, according to Jesus. Remember, he tells us in that teaching that not only is murder wrong, but being angry with your brother for no cause is also wrong. And he talks about not just adultery being sin, but lusting for someone in your heart is also sin. So Augustine is, he's not making a distinction

between the actual performance of the sin and the thought of the sin, so long as the will has already consented. And you have probably found where in battles against temptation, you're about to do something that you know you're not supposed to do or you've struggled with before and somehow the circumstances are contrived to where you're unable to follow through with it. [chuckle] And your will has already consented so you're already guilty, but you haven't actually done the act. And so there is a mitigation of the sin because it hasn't actually been followed through. But Jesus talks about how if we have consented with the will, then we've really already done it.

0:42:05.0 SC: It's just as bad. So we have to just be aware that surrendering to sin weakens the spirit bits and bits at a time, and then there's an attraction to sin. And then it becomes a habit and the habit becomes a stronghold and it becomes so powerful that it's almost impossible to conquer it. And that's why Jesus says, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. And what he means there in committing sin is having an ongoing habit. If you have an ongoing habit of sin, then you're a slave to that sin. And yet the Bible tells us that sin should have no dominion over us because we are not under the law but under grace. Our sin deserves judgment. It deserves all of the blame and all of the self accusation and all of the shame and all of the guilt that we heap on ourselves. But we are not under law, we are under grace, we are under mercy. And so there should never, never, never be a time when we are resistant to or afraid to go to confession and be healed of the guilt. Because the sin and the guilt, sin and guilt causes depression and anxiety. It causes discouragement, it deceives, it divides. It divides us from ourselves, from other people, and from God. It distracts us from the mission that God has put us here for and it's discouraging. It causes us to despair that we'll never be free of it.

0:43:47.8 SC: But here is the truth. The truth is you can be free from sin. Paul is so really, really clear about this and this is the essence of the good news. Sin shall have no dominion over us. All of our lives are the reassertion of the proper dominion that God gave the human person both within himself and also on the earth. We forfeited that dominion to the enemy at original sin and we're born into that forfeit, but baptism and confirmation and confession afterward, they reassert proper dominion both in ourselves, in our families, in our parishes, in our churches, and in the world, one person at a time, one decision at a time, one victory over sin at a time. And so I guess what I'm saying through this whole show is enter the battle with more conviction than you had before, knowing that all of the angels and saints are standing by to help. They are contriving all... Even our failures into what is best for us so that we can learn from those failures and do better the next time. It's never, never, never too late to turn away from a sin that enslaves you. Go to confession, repent, which means to turn away. And honestly, unless you have an intention to amend your life, a purpose of amendment, unless we have that, a confession is not gonna even be beneficial. If we are gonna go to confession only to just know that we're gonna turn around and do the very same thing with no effort whatsoever, then the whole confession is invalid.

0:46:00.8 SC: So we need a good strategy. We need a purpose of amendment. We need to know that we're led away by our own desires in the world and in the flesh, that our flesh has to be mortified. We have to detach ourselves from the emotional connections and attachments that we have to people and to things and to places, which is, Paul calls that all demonic. Or not Paul, James. He calls that all demonic in James 1 where I read about how we are drawn away by our own desires. He says later on in that chapter that if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above but is earthly. It's sensual, it's demonic, for where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is pure and peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of

mercy and good fruits without partiality and without hypocrisy. The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. So he's talking there about the difference in godly wisdom and the lies of the enemy. And he's saying that it is our envy and our self-seeking, those things that made the demons fall that cause us to sin. They must be battled immediately and repetitively. Until next week, I'm Sonja Corbitt, your Catholic evangelista, and we'll finish out the series next week with a summary show.

[music]

0:47:51.3 Speaker 4: Thank you for listening to the Bible Study Evangelista show. Find out more at biblestudyevangelista.com.

