

Open Doors

No matter how much or how long you heat your house, if your front door is wide open, you're still going to feel cold. If we think about the Armor of God, what happens when we leave pieces off? What happens if we don't properly care for our armor and weapons? We leave ourselves vulnerable and weak. These become the conditions that the enemy loves to exploit. Now, this does not remove our security in our eternal home as Christians, but it can affect our walk and witness as believers on earth.

But first, we need to address one really common idea: **suffering is not a signal of spiritual health.**

Job 1:1, 12

There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil. [...] And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

Matthew 10:22

and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

John 16:33

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.

2 Timothy 3:12

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted

Outcome does not indicate cause. Plenty of very evil people lived luxurious and easy lives, while good, Godly people suffered all their lives. Yes, sin and the demonic *can and do* cause suffering. But so does following Jesus. We do not use suffering as a spiritual barometer.

Ephesians 4:26-27

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity (**topos**) to the devil.

In other translations, **topos** is rendered as 'place,' 'foothold,' or 'ground.' Paul says it is okay to be angry. But when anger leads to sin, and when it simmers into bitterness or resentment, it gives ground to the devil. This is an example of leaving a door open. What happens when an open door is then exploited?

Proverbs 5:22

The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him,
and he is held fast in the cords of his sin.

The Hebrew word translated as ensnare means to **catch, overthrow, or assume control**.

So we've already learned that uncontrolled anger can give the devil a foothold; what else can give ground as well? For each verse, identify the action that leads to ensnarement.

2 Corinthians 2:10-11

Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

James 4:6-7

Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

1 Corinthians 10:21

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

James 1:14-15

But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

What things then lead to spiritual compromise?

In practical terms, these areas of weakness in our lives are often not obvious. They usually appear in tolerated patterns, or they may sit in complete blindspots. They can be things we participate in day-to-day, family traditions we've never evaluated, or even lies and false beliefs embedded in our hearts. This is not to make us paranoid, but rather to make us humble. So how do we find these open doors and close them?

We start with introspection **and** prayer. Introspection starts with asking ourselves questions and honestly considering the answers.

- Where am I harboring resentment?
- Where am I resisting repentance?
- Where am I nurturing pride?
- Where am I dividing loyalty?
- Where am I justifying sin?
- Where am I neglecting prayer and Scripture?

Introspection alone is good, but when things sit in well-worn patterns or blind spots, we need help to have them revealed to us, and this is where we petition the Holy Spirit for help.

Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!

When we've identified or been convicted of sins that may be leaving us open, we repent of them.

1 John 1:8-10

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

But true repentance does not end with confession.

Ephesians 4:22-24

to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

And finally, walk in the path of righteousness.

Galatians 5:16

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Now these things are the epitome of easier said than done. None of us are alone in feeling this way.

Romans 7:15, 18-20

For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. [...] For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

Paul shows how he struggled too with what all sinners struggle with. But he follows with this:

Romans 8:1

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Believers are still sinners, but we are sinners who are forgiven. We are not condemned. But as Revelation reminds us, we are in the midst of a battle against a defeated foe who continues to lash out at us. But again, Paul lays this battle out with clarity:

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

Closing doors is not about guilt or aiming for perfection; this is about alignment and formation. We don't stop growing when we convert to being Christians, but we strive to mature in our faith. This is about building spiritual discipline, resisting the devil, and knowing where your strength as a Christian comes from.

This Week's Takeaway

How do we open doors and leave ourselves spiritually compromised?

What can happen if we leave doors open and unattended?

What is the first step we can take to finding and closing these doors?

Preparing for Next Week

To prepare for class next week, pray Psalm 139:23-24 every day this week.

1. Ask God to reveal resentment, pride, compromise, division, disobedience, or even reliance on the world instead of Him. This is not an exhaustive list. If you know where you may be weak, pray specifically for that, but leave it open for the Spirit to convict.
2. If something is revealed to you (and it is okay if you feel nothing is revealed), confess it specifically. Then consider or ask what obedience in that area of your life might look like. What does it mean to “put off” the old and “put on” righteousness?

Perhaps it is doing a deliberate act of kindness when you feel angry. Or choosing to do something for someone else as an act of service when you feel pride. Again, pray about what this might be.

3. Notice any resistance. What thoughts distract you? Where do old patterns push back?
4. Record these things for yourself. You will **not** have to share with the class, but you may if you'd like.

If nothing is revealed to you throughout the week, consider how you might respond to a friend who did have something revealed to them. How would you encourage them? Hold them accountable? Record your answers to share with the class.