

Skillful Swordsmen

"And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Ephesians 6:17)

We should all have the goal to become *Mighty in Spirit* in these evil days. In order to do so, we must: *"take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist when the times are evil, and after you have done everything, to stand firm" (Ephesians 4:13)*. Scripture urges us to be good swordsmen that are able to fully utilize the *Two-Edged Sword of God (Hebrews 4:12 and Revelation 1:16)* against the enemy of God (Satan). *Yeshua* illustrated the proper use of the *Father's Word (Abba's Sword)* by quoting precise Scriptures (He quoted from Deuteronomy!) in defeating Satan (*Matthew 4:1-11*). If we are to be *skillful swordsmen* and win the battle with the enemy, we must do so with *"clean hands and a pure heart" (Psalm 24:4a)*. We must have: *"a pure heart and a clear conscience and a genuine faith" (1 Timothy 1:5b)*. We must surely cleanse our hearts from secret desires that are evil in the sight of the Lord.

What hidden desires, motives, ambitions, longings, and lusts, which altogether give Satan permission and the freedom to bring related temptations, are we guilty of? Here are the BIG three: (1) The *Love of the World*, i.e., *"The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"*: (*"¹⁵Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For everything in the world—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the boasting of life—is not from the Father but from the world" (1 John 2:15-16)*); (2) The *Love of Wealth* (money): (*"¹⁰For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil—some, longing for it, have gone astray from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows (1 Timothy 6:10)"*); and (3) A *Desire for Revenge*: (*"¹⁵But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions" (Matthew 6:15)*).

Satan uses our *hidden desires* to defeat us by planting his suggestions and reasoning in our minds and leading us to think that these are our own ideas. Our *double mindedness* or *secret longings* tend to make our deliverance prayers ineffective. (*"⁶But let him ask in faith, without any doubting—for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord—⁸he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (James 1:6-8)*).

It is not easy to purify our hearts because (*"⁹The heart is deceitful above all things, and incurable—who can know it? ¹⁰I Adonai search the heart, I try the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds" (Jer. 17:9-10)*). We must, therefore, spend time before the Lord and ask Him to search our hearts. (*"...Then all of Messiah's communities will know that I am the One who searches minds and hearts and I will give to each of you according to your deeds" (Revelation 2:23)*). Our heart attitude in the presence of the Almighty will tell Him how sincere we are in purifying our double mindedness. This is why He instructs us to (*"⁸Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded! ⁹Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves in the sight of Adonai, and He shall lift you up" (James 4:9-10)*). But, if we are sincere, the Holy Spirit will reveal the secret desires of our heart which Satan is using as the basis for our temptations. These desires will be related to our love of the things of this world: (*"⁴You adulteresses! Don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you think that in vain the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit which He made to dwell in us?" (James 4:4-5)*). When the Holy Spirit reveals our hidden motives, *Adonai* will give us the grace (desire and power) to purify our hearts as we humble ourselves before Him: (*"⁶But He gives greater grace. Therefore it says, 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble'" (James 4:6)*

In the published addendum for today's message, we provide 25 examples of Satan's temptations and deceptions which reveal our secret motives that we must eliminate completely from our hearts. For the sake of brevity, I'll choose a few of them to illustrate the issues. *Adonai* is raising a generation of overcomers and by faith we are part of that generation. *Shabbat Shalom!*