



A Well-Defined
FAITH

[fāth] (noun)

Biblical words used in church...
Discover what they really mean.



Sunday
May 31, 2026

Example Teaching Rhythm

Welcome and Connect: 10 Minutes

This helps people feel connected and more comfortable participating in the study and discussion.

Look Forward: 5-10 Minutes

Share any important church events, service opportunities, or upcoming group plans. Keep this brief but clear.

Look at Scripture: 25-35 Minutes

This is the main focus of Community Groups. Read the selected scripture together and guide the group through discussion questions and observations.

Prayer: 10 Minutes

Invite members to share prayer requests and praises, then pray together as a group. This is a time to support one another.

Explaining the H.E.A.R Method

The acronym **HEAR** stands for **Highlight, Explain, Apply, and Respond**. Each of these four steps aims to cultivate an atmosphere to hear God speak.

Highlight - After praying for the Holy Spirit's guidance, read the passage of scripture, and highlight each verse that speaks to you.

Explain - Explain what the text means. Ask questions like:

- Who wrote this, to whom, and why? What does this reveal about God? What do the key words actually mean? What did this call the original audience to, and what does that reveal for me?

By asking questions, with the help of God's Spirit, and by using helpful study resources, you can understand the meaning of a passage or verse.

Apply - This application is the heart of the process. Everything you have done so far culminates under this heading. As you have done before, work to uncover the significance of these verses and the implications they have. Ask questions like:

- What does this passage reveal about God, yourself, or the world that you need to embrace or sit with? Does this passage challenge an attitude, assumption, or habit that needs to change? Is there something to do? Is there someone to love?

Respond - Your response to the passage may take on many forms. Ask: Is there something to pray? - Let the passage shape your prayer, not just inform it. Use the "Five Daily Prayer Prompts" to guide you in your response.

“Satan - God's Adversary Who Seeks To Alienate You From Your Creator”

Introduction

Most people have a category for Satan that they have never actually examined. It came together from horror films, Halloween decorations, offhand jokes, and perhaps a well-meaning sermon at exactly the wrong moment. Red skin. Horns. A pitchfork. Something cartoonish enough that it never quite feels like a real threat – and so it quietly gets filed away as the part of the Christian vocabulary that makes serious people uncomfortable.

Which is exactly how alienation works.

The biblical picture of Satan is not a Halloween costume. It is a description of an adversary – a word that means one who opposes, who takes a side against you, who actively works to see you fail. The Hebrew word in Job is *hasatan*: the accuser, the one who stands opposed. The Greek word the New Testament uses, *diabolos*, means one who throws things between – a slanderer, a divider, someone whose entire function is to insert something between you and the one you belong to.

His goal is not your destruction in some dramatic sense. It is your distance. The Christian drifting in low-grade spiritual numbness – who has quietly stopped praying, slowly stopped trusting, gradually come to believe that God is simply not enough – may be in more danger than one facing an obvious temptation.

Both passages we study today understand this. Peter writes from the edge of tremendous loss – communities in genuine suffering, wondering whether God is present. James writes to people who have drifted without quite noticing when the drifting started. Neither passage offers a lecture on demonology. Both offer something more useful: a posture and a promise.

The honest question this passage presses is not whether you believe in Satan. It is whether you live as though the danger is real – and whether you have adopted the resistance that makes it answerable.

Discussion Questions + Illustration

Select a question or two below to open up discussion.

- When you hear the word "Satan," what is your honest first reaction – and what does that reveal about how seriously you take the spiritual life?
- Have you ever drifted from God slowly, without a single dramatic moment you could point to? What did that feel like from the inside?
- Is there an area of your life where you have been experiencing accusation – a persistent voice that says you are too far gone, too disqualified? Where do you think that voice comes from?
- What's the difference between vigilance and anxiety? How do you hold those apart?
- Peter tells his readers that Christians throughout the world are undergoing the same suffering. What difference does it make to know you are not alone?

During the Second World War, Operation Fortitude convinced German high command that the Allied invasion would land at Pas-de-Calais, not Normandy – not through force, but through misdirection. Fake radio traffic, inflatable tanks, a phantom army. The entire apparatus existed for one purpose: to make them look the wrong direction.

- That is precisely the shape of the adversary Peter describes. The danger is rarely a frontal assault. It is sustained misdirection – away from prayer, away from community, away from Scripture – until the isolation itself becomes the wound.

Highlight | Read 1 Peter 5:8-9; James 4:7

First Peter was written to communities scattered across what is now northern Turkey – people who had paid real costs for their faith, who were experiencing ongoing social and economic pressure, and who were wondering whether the suffering meant God had abandoned them. Peter does not minimize their situation. He names it. And then he frames it: your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

The image is not random. A roaring lion does not always attack – sometimes it roars to scatter, to isolate, to cut one animal from the herd. Peter's prescription is not panic. It is sobriety and watchfulness – and the reminder that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brothers and sisters throughout the world. Isolation is the adversary's most effective tool. Community is one of the most effective answers.

James 4:7 gives the same reality in compressed form and two movements: submit to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you. The order is not incidental. Resistance that is not grounded in submission becomes willpower – and willpower has a ceiling. Resistance grounded in a God you have actually drawn near to is a different thing entirely.

- What does it mean that the adversary is described as prowling rather than attacking directly? What does that suggest about how spiritual danger usually arrives?
- Why does Peter connect suffering with the adversary's activity – and what does that mean for how a Christian interprets a difficult season?

Explain | Consider the Context

Both letters address communities under pressure – Peter writing to those facing external persecution and displacement, James to those facing internal drift and worldliness so gradual it no longer looked like worldliness. In both cases, the adversary's activity is not loud. It works through the situation, not around it.

The Greek word Peter uses – *antidikos* – is a legal term: an adversary in court, someone whose function is to bring charges. This gives texture to Satan's other New Testament title: the accuser. His primary weapon is not dramatic temptation but persistent accusation – the voice that says you are too disqualified to draw near, too far gone to bother.

James anchors resistance in a prior movement: submission. *Hupotasso* – to arrange oneself under – is not the image of defeat but of alignment. *Anthistemi*: to stand firm, to hold ground. And then the promise: he will flee. The adversary has no answer for a person genuinely near to God.

- Peter describes Christians throughout the world experiencing the same suffering. Why does that shared experience matter – and what would it change about how you hold your own difficulty?
- James doesn't say "resist the devil" alone – he pairs it with "submit to God" and "draw near to God." Why does resistance without submission eventually fail?

Apply | Discuss as a Group

The passages do not ask you to become obsessed with the adversary. They ask you to be clear-eyed about the reality and appropriately postured toward it.

The most common form of spiritual danger is not dramatic temptation. It is drift – the slow accumulation of small distances, each one easy to explain, none of them alarming on its own. That is precisely what the adversary's strategy depends on.

Peter's prescription – sober-minded, watchful – is not paranoia. It is the attentiveness of someone who takes the stakes seriously. James emphasizes the initiative available to you: draw near to God. Not after you have cleaned yourself up. Not when you feel more qualified. Now. The promise is startling in its simplicity: draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

- Where in your life has the distance from God grown quietly – without a moment you could point to as the turning point?
- Is there an area where you have been believing accusation rather than conviction – a voice that tells you you are too far gone rather than one that calls you back? What would it look like to name that and refuse it this week?

Respond | How should I live/pray?

Neither Peter nor James ends with fear. That is worth noticing. Peter ends with a doxology – glory and dominion to God forever. James ends with an invitation – draw near, and He will draw near to you. Both passages describe a real adversary and offer a real answer, and neither answer is primarily about the adversary. The answer is about God. About proximity. About the kind of resistance that is less willpower and more alignment.

The posture both passages call you to is not the posture of someone bracing against a storm. It is the posture of someone who knows which direction the shelter is and has decided to face it. Peter calls it sobriety and watchfulness. James calls it submission and nearness. They are describing the same thing from different angles: a person who is awake to the stakes, grounded in submission to God, and not trying to fight from a position of isolation.

That last word matters. The adversary's most reliable strategy is not a frontal assault. It is the slow erosion of the connections that sustain you – prayer that fades, community that gets deprioritized, Scripture that stays unopened. Peter's antidote is not a better defense mechanism. It is the reminder that you are not alone – that the suffering is shared, that the God who called you is faithful, and that resistance is not something you generate but something you receive when you are properly positioned.

The most important thing this week may not be a dramatic act of spiritual warfare. It may simply be: pray. Show up. Draw near. Resist the small drift before it becomes a large one. The promise is that this is enough – and that the God of all grace is working even in the season you can't see the end of.

- Where have you been trying to resist the adversary in your own strength rather than from a position of genuine nearness to God?
- What is one specific step you can take this week to close a distance – in prayer, in community, in Scripture – that has quietly opened up?

Response Tool: Five Daily Prayer Prompts

As you leave today, let these five questions carry the weight of your response into the week ahead – not as a checklist, but as an ongoing conversation with God. Introduce the five daily questions as a simple spiritual practice that can help us intentionally live out our faith in our workplaces, homes, families, and communities.

- God, where do you want me to go?
- God, who do you want me to see?
- God, what do you want me to say?
- God, what do you want me to pray?
- God, how do you want me to serve?

After this time of reflection, transition into a time of prayer requests. Allow time for members to share and, if appropriate, allow others in the class to pray for each other.

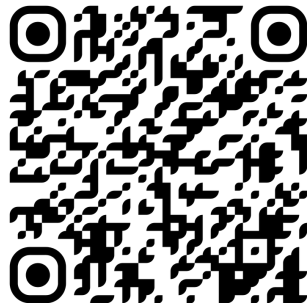
Additional Commentary

- On hasatan / diabolos – the names: The Hebrew hasatan means "the accuser," "the adversary." The Greek diabolos carries the image of one who throws things between – a divider, a slanderer. Neither name describes a being defined by horror or spectacle. Both describe a function: opposition to the relationship between God and human beings.
- On "like a roaring lion" (1 Peter 5:8): Peter does not say the adversary is a lion – he says he prowls like one. Lions roar to panic and scatter. The danger the image points to is isolation – the believer cut off from community, from the resources that sustain vigilance.
- On "your brothers and sisters throughout the world" (1 Peter 5:9): Peter does not tell his readers to fight alone. The awareness that suffering is shared is itself a form of resistance against the adversary's most effective tool: the lie that you are uniquely disqualified, uniquely far, uniquely beyond reach.
- On anthistemi – "resist" (James 4:7): A military term for holding ground under pressure. But James places resistance in a sequence: submit first, then resist. Resistance attempted without submission is self-reliance dressed in spiritual language. The strength that makes resistance possible is received, not generated.
- On "draw near to God, and he will draw near to you" (James 4:8): The Greek eggizō is directional – to close a gap. James assumes a gap exists and does not require it to be explained. What he offers is a description of movement, not a description of arrival. The gap does not have to be fully closed for the promise to activate – the direction of movement is what matters. One step is met by God. This means the person who feels farthest away is not disqualified; they are, by James's logic, exactly positioned to test the promise.
- On "he will flee from you" (James 4:7): The adversary has no foothold in a life genuinely submitted to God and genuinely near to Him. His power is real but not ultimate. His strategy depends on a distance the believer has the ability – and the invitation – to close.

Community Group Resource Page

Visit our website to view our **leadership resources**.

From Community Group training and resources to Discipleship Group starter guides, we want to equip you to make disciples.



Additional Study

Watch/Listen

Bible Project - 1 Peter



See a collection of videos, classes, and articles that dive into [1 Peter 5:8-9](#).

Bible Project - Satan + Demons



In this video, we explore **Satan**, tracing back to Genesis, where darkness first challenges God.

Overview

Enduring Word - James 4



Text commentary, written materials, and audio/video recordings over [James 4](#).

Got Questions - Satan



Biblical Q&A, articles, translations, audios, videos, apps, social media, podcasts, and more on [Satan](#).

Expand

Bible Reference - 1 Peter 5



Explore chapter and verse commentaries to deepen your understanding of [1 Peter 5:8-9](#).

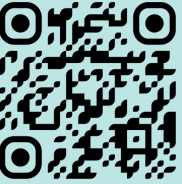
Bible Hub - James 4:7



Parallel translations, language tools, commentaries, and much more on [James 4:7](#).

Deepen

Logos Factbook - Satan



Logos Factbook shares information resources and articles about [Satan](#).

Blue Letter Bible - Satan



Original texts, Translations, Cross-Refs, Commentaries, Dictionaries + more on [Satan](#).

