

Victim or Victor

1 Peter 5:8–9 NLT

Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith.

2 Corinthians 10:3–5 NLT

We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of *human reasoning* and to *destroy false arguments*. We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.

The only authority the devil has is the authority he has from us!

Matthew 28:18 NLT

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth."

Genesis 3:1–7 NLT

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?"

"Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.' "

"You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. "God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil." The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

The stepwise progression of the enemy’s Big Lie:

1. The enemy looks to shift focus from *abundance* to *limitation*.
2. The enemy accuses God of not being good.
3. The enemy invites us to become independent from God.

A Victim Strategy is an enemy tactic in which we believe the lie and then seek to apportion blame for our resulting circumstances onto someone or something else.

Numbers 13:1–2,25–14:4 NLT

The Lord now said to Moses, ‘Send out men to explore the land of Canaan, the land I am giving to the Israelites. Send one leader from each of the twelve ancestral tribes.’” ...

(25) After exploring the land for forty days, the men returned to Moses, Aaron, and the whole community of Israel at Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran. They reported to the whole community what they had seen and showed them the fruit they had taken from the land. This was their report to Moses: ‘We entered the land you sent us to explore, and it is indeed a bountiful country—a land flowing with milk and honey. Here is the kind of fruit it produces. But the people living there are powerful, and their towns are large and fortified. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak! The Amalekites live in the Negev, and the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country. The Canaanites live along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and along the Jordan Valley.’

But Caleb tried to quiet the people as they stood before Moses. ‘Let’s go at once to take the land,’ he said. ‘We can certainly conquer it!’

But the other men who had explored the land with him disagreed. “We can’t go up against them! They are stronger than we are!” So they spread this bad report about the land among the Israelites: “The land we traveled through and explored will devour anyone who goes to live there. All the people we saw were huge. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak. Next to them we felt like grasshoppers, and that’s what they thought, too!”

(14:1) Then the whole community began weeping aloud, and they cried all night. Their voices rose in a great chorus of protest against Moses and Aaron. “If only we had died in Egypt, or even here in the wilderness!” they complained. “Why is the Lord taking us to this country only to have us die in battle? Our wives and our little ones will be carried off as plunder! Wouldn’t it be better for us to return to Egypt?” Then they plotted among themselves, “Let’s choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!”

**The call of God on your life is too big for you to accomplish without Him!
Every excuse we make for our life's condition is just an attempt to avoid accepting responsibility.**

Truth 1: You are ridiculously in charge of your life!

Truth 2: You are not alone!

Joshua 1:9 NLT

“This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For [Yahweh] your God is with you wherever you go.”

4 keys to defeating a Victim Strategy:

1. In all things, give thanks to God.

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 NLT

Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

2. Quickly forgive when we are wronged.

Luke 23:33-34 NLT

When they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing.”

3. Celebrate your weaknesses as a testimony of God's strength.

2 Corinthians 12:9–10 NLT

Each time [the Lord] said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

4. Accept responsibility for every aspect of your life.

Small Group Guide: Victim or Victor

Opening Question

Think of a time you felt genuinely stuck — in a situation, a relationship, a pattern. Looking back, was there anything you could have done differently, or did circumstances really have you boxed in? What made it hard to see at the time?

The Oldest Lie Still Working

The enemy is not particularly creative. He has been running the same play since the Garden of Eden, and it still works — not because it is sophisticated, but because it is subtle and because we are not paying attention. Peter's warning is blunt: the devil prowls like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour, and the person he finds is the one being casual with real danger (1 Peter 5:8-9). Spiritual warfare is not optional for Christians. It is the context we live in, and ignoring it does not make us safer. It makes us easier targets.

The enemy's primary weapon is the lie. According to 2 Corinthians 10, what he is actually building are "strongholds of human reasoning," which are wrong ways of thinking that operate like a bug in software, producing wrong outputs no matter how hard we try to correct them at the surface level. A stronghold is not a bad habit or a weak moment. It is a false belief that has been accepted as true and now shapes how we interpret everything else. The only way to demolish it is to identify the lie underneath and replace it with truth.

The original lie has three movements, each one building on the last. First, the serpent shifts Eve's attention from abundance to limitation — from the dozens of trees they could freely eat from to the one they could not. This is a critical move, because a limit can only feel like evidence of God's selfishness if you have stopped looking at everything else He has given. Second, once the focus has narrowed to the limitation, the accusation lands: God is not actually good. He has a hidden agenda. He is holding something back for His own benefit. Third, if God cannot be trusted, the obvious solution is self-reliance — become your own god, make your own calls, live on your own terms. The enemy's goal is never to recruit followers for himself. It is to get us to worship the image of God within us rather than God Himself.

This is where the Victim Strategy enters. A victim strategy is what happens when we believe the lie and then outsource responsibility for our circumstances onto someone or something else. It sounds like: "It's not my fault." "There's nothing I can do." "I'm stuck." "I don't have what I need." Behind every one of those statements is the same hidden belief: God is either not in control or He does not care. The ten spies who came

back from Canaan were not lying about the giants. The giants were real. What they got wrong was the arithmetic — they measured the obstacles against their own size instead of against the size of God. Joshua and Caleb looked at the same land, the same fortified cities, and concluded something entirely different, because they were doing different math.

Stephen Covey's [author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*] framework of the Circle of Concern versus the Circle of Influence is useful here. The Circle of Concern contains everything that affects us but that we cannot control — the economy, other people's choices, our past. The Circle of Influence contains what we actually can do something about. The enemy loves to plant us firmly in the Circle of Concern and convince us that's where all the action is. But every excuse is ultimately a decision to focus *there* instead of *here*. And the truth is: you are ridiculously in charge of your life — what you read, who you spend time with, how you steward your time, what you do with what you have. And you are not doing it alone. The God who said "be strong and courageous" also said "I am with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9). Those two things go together.

For Discussion

1. The three steps of the enemy's Big Lie are in your notes: shift focus to limitation, accuse God of not being good, invite independence from God. Where do you see that progression most clearly operating in your own life right now, or in someone close to you?
2. The ten spies weren't wrong about the giants — they were wrong about the math. They evaluated the obstacles against their own size instead of God's. Is there a situation in your life right now where you might be doing the same thing? What would it look like to evaluate it against God's size instead?
3. Your notes draw a distinction between being victimized — genuinely overpowered by someone else — and owning a victim identity. How do you hold those two things together? Is it possible to acknowledge real pain and real injustice while still refusing the victim strategy?
4. The four keys to defeating a victim strategy are in your notes: gratitude, forgiveness, celebrating weakness, and accepting responsibility. Which of those four is hardest for you personally right now — and what does that resistance tell you?

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, You are good — not in spite of the limits and difficulties in our lives, but in the middle of them. Forgive us for the times we have narrowed our focus to what we lack and used it as evidence against Your goodness. We renounce the victim

strategy. We renounce the lie that You are withholding something from us, that You are not in control, or that You do not care. Jesus, You have all authority in heaven and on earth, and the only authority the enemy has is what we hand him. Take it back. Holy Spirit, show us where we have been making excuses and give us the courage to accept responsibility instead. Where we are weak, be strong. Where we are afraid, help us to be courageous. Remind us that You are with us wherever we go. Make us people who live like victors, not victims, because that is what You have already made us. In Jesus' name, amen.