

SNAPSHOTS: THE STORIES BEHIND THE PICTURES, 4 pgs.

A Bible study inspired by and largely adapted from IBLP materials <http://iblp.org/iblp/>.

Introduction

Have you seen The Big Picture Story Bible?

What is the message of this book?

The Bible tells the story of the history of God's work in many episodes.

What are the pictures for? To illustrate **key events** that occur in the episodes.

Why do people take pictures at events? To remind them of the experience.

What is the relationship between a picture and a story?

A picture is like a **snapshot** that reminds us of the story surrounding the experience or incident.

In order to tell the whole story of life and history, God divides it into parts and uses word-pictures. Notice the stories that come to mind with the following words: **creation; fall; flood; new creation**.

What other biblical terms come to mind that encapsulate a story? **Redemption; manna**

None of these individual lessons are sufficient to tell the complete story. They are parts within the overall story. Let's look at a single **word-picture** in the New Testament and see if we can tease out the story behind the picture.

The Devil's Place

Read **Eph.4:26-27** in the **ESV**.

Notice the word *opportunity*. Here are some of the ways this word has been [or could be] translated: *opportunity* (ESV; NASV; RSV; RBV); *chance* (Williams); *chance to work* (Beck); *leave [or make] room* (Weymouth; NRSV); *loop-hole* (NEB); *occasion for acting* (Wuest); *foothold* (NIV; TLV; Phillips); *mighty foothold* (NLB); *place* (KJV; NKJV; 1901 ASV; Young's); *give [or leave] room* (Darby; NABRE); *opening* (NCB); *a way to defeat [or control] you* (New Century; TCL; ERV; EXB; WE); *let the devil start working in your life* (NLV); *opportunity [to lead you into sin by holding a grudge, nurturing anger, harboring resentment, or cultivating bitterness]* (AMP); *don't use your anger as fuel for revenge. And don't stay angry. Don't go to bed angry. Don't give the Devil that kind of foothold in your life* (MSG).

The actual Greek word used here refers to *a section of territory, a parcel of land* that could be just as well translated *give [or yield] ground*. So for this lesson, we'll use the New King James, *Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give **place** to the devil*.

How would you classify or categorize **Eph.4:26-27**? **STERN WARNING!**

What is the passage about? We're angry about something and the devil is attacking by tempting us to nurse our anger, to hold on to that anger until it turns into a spiritual problem like bitterness, resentment, or hatred. The enemy of our soul is attempting to gain access to our life through feeding the flames of our anger.

What is the snapshot in **v.27**? Picture our soul as a country that is being attacked by forces invading

from the sea through naval bombardment of your shoreline defenses.

What are the weapons Satan uses?

Deception; cunning lies; false innuendos; subtle accusations; truth twisted and misused; confusion.

What are your defenses? **Eph.6** has a snapshot about gearing-up for spiritual battle against the devil's wiles (schemes) that begins with the belt of truth and breastplate of righteousness (**v.14**).

Where is this battle being fought? In our thoughts.

Name someone in the Bible who was attacked in this way.

Cain [see Short Course – Temptation <http://pop.eradman.com/>]

Though this is the extent of this word-picture in this passage, the rest of the story is implied by it and supported by the New Testament.

What is the enemy's first objective? To establish a beachhead on our shore.

How does he do that? By getting us to give-in to the temptations provoked by his lies and sin. This is how we give up ground to the devil.

Now where is the battle? In our actions.

Once Satan has control of a small area of our turf, what is his next objective? To press inland where he can establish a **fortified position** (fort; stronghold) to serve as a base of operations within our own territory from which to continue assaulting our faith.

Now where is the battlefield? Our habits.

What are some of the results of Satan's assaults carried out from his base of operations within our soul? Anxiety; doubts; fears; depression; shame; envy; insecurity; lust; arrogance; self-rejection; jealousy; anger; rationalizing; etc.

What are some of the physical consequences that may result from the devil's forays from his stronghold? High blood pressure; headaches; insomnia; allergies; back pain; etc.

We have identified fronts at which the battle with the devil occurs as thoughts, actions, and habits. Answering the following two questions truthfully will help you to evaluate yourself with respect to the devil's influence: on how many fronts on which you are presently being engaged? ____ Have you committed wrongdoing that your parents are not aware of? ____

What possible action can you take to recover the surrendered ground? Return to the Lord and take the following steps of repentance:

1. Think beyond the reasons for your anger and stop blaming the circumstances or other people who caused it. Trace the anger back to the initial sins and wrong attitudes that produced guilt and tension in the first place making it difficult for you to cope with the irritations and inequities of life. These are the **trespasses** we must confess to God and make right with anyone else we have offended. Only then will we be able to put away all anger, wrath, and malice and be enabled to show kindness and forgive one another (**Eph.4:31-32**). Be specific because God promises.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, 1 Jn.1:9

2. The transfer of one's moral guilt to Christ and the penalty exacted upon Him so He suffered the consequences of it is the only way God can forgive anyone's sins. When we return to Him in repentance, He will keep His promise *to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*. Thank God and claim the sufficiency of the death of Christ for removal of the sins that gave ground to Satan. [see *The Finished Work of Christ* by Francis Schaeffer]

3. Ask your heavenly Father to take back that ground and give you wisdom to tear down the false impressions Satan has constructed on it [introduced into your thinking] that you might be freed from discouragement, fear, and doubt to live in the freedom of His love, peace, and joy.

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you ... Jas.4:6-8

Is allowing anger to foment bitterness or hatred the only way the devil can gain a foothold in your life? No, the passage in **Eph.4** draws other word-pictures to show more ways we can do to let him in.

Let's look at the larger picture in **Eph.4: (EHV)** together.

³Make every effort to ***maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*** ... ¹¹He himself gave the apostles, as well as the prophets, and evangelists, and pastors and teachers, ¹²for the purpose of training the saints for the work of serving [or ministering], in order to build up the body of Christ. ¹³This is to continue until we all reach unity in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God, resulting in a mature man with a stature reaching to the measure of the fullness of Christ ... ¹⁴***The goal is that we would no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, when people use tricks and invent clever ways to lead us astray.*** ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we would in all things grow up into Christ, who is the head. ¹⁶From him the whole body, being joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows in accordance with Christ's activity when he measured out each individual part. He causes the growth of the body so that it builds itself up in love.

¹⁷So ... Do not walk any longer as the Gentiles [ie, pagans] walk, in their futile way of thinking. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, due to the hardness of their hearts. ¹⁹Because they have no sense of shame, they have given themselves over to sensuality, with an ever-increasing desire to practice every kind of impurity ...

²²... you were taught to take off the old self, which is corrupted by its deceitful desires, ²³and to be renewed continually in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴and to put on the new self [see *New Self & The New Man p.3 Beyond Abraham*], which has been created to be like God in righteousness and true holiness.

²⁵Therefore, after you put away lying, let each of you speak truthfully with your neighbor, because ***we are all members of one body.*** ²⁶Be angry, yet do not sin. [Ps.4:4] ... [Get over it quickly] ²⁷Do not give the Devil an opportunity. ²⁸Let the one who has been stealing steal no longer. Instead, let him work hard doing what is good with his own hands, so that he has something to share with a person who is in need [a complete reversal]. ²⁹Do not let any unwholesome talk come from your mouths. Say only what is beneficial when there is a need to build up others, so that it will be a blessing to those who hear. ³⁰***Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the***

day of redemption. ³¹Get rid of every kind of bitterness, rage, anger, quarreling, and slander, along with every kind of malice. ³²Instead, be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ has forgiven us.

FURTHER STUDY: How does **Eph.4:28** fit in with those verses that precede it? It is an example of a sin habit that is overcome by the steps of repentance that are then reinforced by engaging in a new-life pattern and purpose [focus] (v.22-24).

How do Paul's words to Timothy relate to our discussion? *I ... sent you out to battle for the right armed only with your faith and a clear conscience. Some, alas, have laid these simple weapons contemptuously aside, and as far as their faith is concerned, have run their ships on the rocks. (1 Tim.1:18-19, Phillips)*