

Closing The Door On The Devil

You Didn't Get Ambushed. You Gave Permission.

A Four-Lesson Study on Access, Authority, and Shutting the Door for Good

DOORS: HOW ACCESS IS GIVEN, NOT TAKEN

Where the Hedge Comes Down and the Lion Starts Looking

Break-Ins Without The Breaking

Let me start with a question. How do most burglars get into a house? If you pictured a crowbar and a shattered window, you're thinking of the movies. Researchers who track this keep [finding](#) the same thing: in more than half of break-ins, the burglar just walked through a door or window somebody forgot to lock.

Think about that. Burglars aren't looking for a fight. They're looking for an opening. They want the easy house.

Here's why I'm starting there. Scripture describes the devil the same way. He isn't pictured kicking down doors. He's pictured checking them. [C.S. Lewis](#) built a whole book around that idea, [The Screwtape Letters](#), where a veteran demon coaches a rookie to work by patience and flattery instead of brute force, waiting for the human to open the door himself.

Paul says it plainly in Ephesians: [“Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil \(Ephesians 4:26-27\).](#) Look at that last phrase. The word for “place” is the Greek [topos](#). It's a city, a seat, a position somebody occupies. Paul isn't warning about an ambush you couldn't see coming. He's warning about real estate you can still choose not to hand over.

And notice what he's talking about. Not a séance. Not a Ouija board. Anger. Plain, ordinary anger that sat there overnight. Something you and I have done by nine o'clock on a Tuesday.

Invitation, Not Invasion

That's the thesis. Access is given, not taken. Over the next four weeks we're going to look at how doors get opened and how to shut them. But today I want you to see one thing first: Scripture treats the enemy's access as bounded, conditional, and traceable. It is never an unstoppable force that just happens to people.

Lewis's demon, Screwtape, makes a point I've heard preachers borrow for years. The safest road to ruin isn't one dramatic sin. It's a slow drift. A thousand little unlocked doors instead of one kicked-in one. Hold that thought, because Job, Peter, and Paul all tell the same story. Nobody describes the enemy breaking in. They describe him waiting at a door somebody else controls. So why does this need saying? Because most of us grew up thinking of temptation and affliction like weather. It rolls in, and there's nothing you can do. Sometimes that's true. [Job 1](#) shows us a case where it is. But as the whole picture, that instinct lets us off a hook Scripture puts us on. If access is mostly given, then the posture of this class isn't fear of what might happen to you. It's responsibility for what you've already handed over.

The Hedge And The Hardship

The clearest picture of a spiritual boundary in the whole Bible comes from the book of Job, and Satan himself is the one who complains about it. Listen to how he puts it to God: [“Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side?” \(Job 1:10\).](#)

That word “hedge” is the Hebrew [suk](#), and it means to entwine, to shut in. Think of a thorn hedge, woven so tight nothing slips through. In [Hosea 2:6](#) the same word describes a hedge of thorns. This isn't a decorative garden border. It's a barrier with teeth.

Notice what he's not complaining about. It's not Job's character. It's a boundary he can't cross without clearance. And when he gets clearance, it comes with a limit: *"Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person" (Job 1:12).* The boundary moves, but it never disappears. Even when he's allowed to strike again later in the book, the line just narrows to a new spot. Permission, not a blank check, every time.

Now, careful here. Job is the exception that proves the rule, not the model for the next three weeks. Job didn't open any door through sin. The text calls him *"blameless and upright" (Job 1:1).* His hedge came down by God's sovereign permission, not Job's failure. The doors we'll study in Lessons Two and Three are doors people open themselves, through choices you can name.

Here's the same pattern, centuries later, aimed at a disciple instead of a patriarch. Jesus tells Peter: *"Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat" (Luke 22:31).* Asked. Not seized. Two of the most severe trials in Scripture, a righteous man's fortune and a disciple's faith, both start with the enemy making a request instead of exercising a right. If he needed clearance to move against Job and against Peter, he's not working with a blank check against the rest of us.

Lazy Locks And Lurking Lions

Peter, the same man Satan asked to sift, later wrote this: *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).*

Picture that lion. A roaring lion is terrifying, but look at the verb. He's *"seeking"*. He has to prowl. A lion that has to look isn't a lion with unlimited access to every animal on the savanna. As a rule, lions don't charge a herd standing alert in formation. They wait for the straggler. The one who wanders. The one who stops paying attention. And the roar? That's part of the strategy. It's meant to panic the herd into scattering, because a scattered herd produces stragglers.

The Greek word for *"devour"* is [katapino](#). And look at Peter's command in the same verse: be sober, be vigilant. That only makes sense if alertness changes the outcome. You don't tell somebody to stay alert against something that's going to get them anyway. You tell them because alertness works.

And Peter knew this from the inside. The same night Jesus warned him, Peter insisted he would never stumble ([Matthew 26:33-35](#)). Hours later he denied even knowing Christ, three times, before a rooster crowed ([Matthew 26:69-75](#)). Satan's permission wasn't the whole story. Peter's own exhaustion, fear, and overconfidence supplied the opening. So when Peter writes to churches under real persecution, he isn't passing along a theory. He's passing along what his worst night taught him.

Submit First, Stand Second

James gives us the promise side of this, and notice where he starts. He doesn't start with the devil. He starts with God: *"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).*

The order matters. Submission first, resistance second. And look at what James has been talking about right before this: pride, quarreling, worldly desire ([James 4:1-6](#)). Those are the very conditions Paul said, left overnight, hand the enemy a place to stand.

The Greek word for *"resist"* is [anthistemi](#). It's a military word. Holding a line. Standing your ground against an advance. And James doesn't say the devil might flee. He says he will. Submit plus resist equals retreat. That's not the language of random affliction. That's the language of a

conflict with rules, and Paul later describes the equipment for that kind of fight as [the whole armor of God](#), which we'll come back to in Lesson Four.

One more thing about James. He doesn't say resist first and submit later, as if beating the devil earns you standing with God. And he doesn't say submission is enough and resistance is optional, as if passivity counts as faith. He gives you both verbs, in that order. A door closed toward God and a door closed toward the enemy are the same motion seen from two sides.

Diagnosis, Not Drama

So put it all together. Spiritual warfare isn't a fog you can't see through. It's made of identifiable conditions. A place given. A hedge lowered only by request. A target exposed by inattention. A line held or abandoned. And that changes the question. It's not "*why is this happening to me?*" It's "*what door, specifically, is open right now?*"

Now, a quick caution. This is not a license to blame every illness, accident, or bad week on a hidden door. When the disciples assumed a man's blindness traced back to somebody's sin, Jesus corrected them ([John 9:2-3](#)). Where Scripture names a door, take it as seriously as Scripture does. Where it doesn't, don't invent one.

Here's where we're headed. Lesson Two covers sin and the occult, the doors Deuteronomy and Acts name outright. Lesson Three covers the quieter ones, unforgiveness and unresolved anger, which most of us are carrying without calling them that. And Lesson Four is the one this whole class is building toward: how to shut a door, and how to keep it shut.

Who Holds The Handle?

There's one more picture of a door I want you to see, because it's the most famous one in the New Testament. Jesus says to a lukewarm church: ["Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me" \(Revelation 3:20\).](#)

Look at how that door works. Christ knocks. He doesn't kick it in. The same Lord who could crush any resistance stands outside and waits for the door to be opened from the inside. And if the King of Kings honors a door that opens from the inside, you can be sure the enemy isn't entitled to anything better.

The handle is on your side of the door. That's not a burden. That's authority. It means you're not helpless, and it means there are two knockers out there. One comes with an invitation to dinner. The other comes looking for a vacancy. And you're the one who decides which door opens to whom.

The One Who Answers The Door

I don't want you leaving here feeling like a homeowner checking locks alone at midnight. This only works because of who's standing at the door with you. John writes to believers under pressure from false teachers with exactly this reassurance: ["You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" \(1 John 4:4\).](#)

That's the difference between this class and a self-help checklist. Shutting a door isn't a technique you master by willpower. It's a resistance you're enabled for, because the One who lives in you outranks the one looking for an opening. Hold onto that. Every door we're about to name gets closed from a position of strength you didn't generate yourself.

Check The Locks

Here's your assignment, and it can't wait for Lesson Two. Before this week is out, name one specific area where you've been tolerating something instead of resisting it. A grudge you've been nursing. A habit you've quit calling sin. A compromise you've gotten comfortable with. Not

a general confession. A specific one. Write it down. Bring it to God by name. And if there's someone you trust, say it out loud to them. A door named out loud is a door that's already harder to leave open.

Remember Screwtape? If that old demon were reading over your shoulder right now, he'd be hoping for exactly one thing: that you nod along, agree with every word, and change nothing. A vague sense that you should probably tighten things up someday is the best friend he has. He'd much rather you stay fuzzy than get specific, because a fuzzy door never gets shut. So don't give him the fog. Give him a name, a date, and a plan.

And do it this week, while this lesson is still fresh. You'll never be more honest than you are right now. Don't give the moment time to talk you out of it. Then come back next week and we'll start looking at the doors Scripture names outright.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV).