



Hunting Elephants

A South Pacific Christian Ministries Bible Study

Written By: Pastor David Myrick

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Instructions

This study is designed to use questions and scriptures to enable believers to gain understanding. While it may be used for individual study, it is designed for a group setting. The Leader's Guide provides a group leader with additional information, scripture passages, and directional comments. Providing scriptures and some background helps to spur direct the discussion. Depending on the response of those participating in the study, additional questions may be required to direct them to the necessary understanding. If you are going to lead a group discussion, then we suggest that you read the summary first, and then review the discussion, including the discussion points and answers. If you are using this study for your personal study time, then read the summary and then answer the questions on the Study Section. Make sure that you read and study the scriptures used in the Study. After you have completed the Study Section, then compare your answers to those that you will find in the Leader's Guide.

It should be noted that this and our other studies often reference scriptural symbolism. As with the parables that Jesus told, a scriptural symbolism represents a deeper truth found within a passage. In order for scriptural symbolism to be valid it must line up with scripture and be supported by scripture and conform to the character of God.

All scripture references found in this study are the King James version, unless otherwise noted. Do not use or allow the use of none scripture references. In particular, books that are not part of the Bible. If a scripture seems questionable, compare it to the King James and Amplified versions. Also, in a group setting, do not allow anyone to dominate the discussion that will hinder others. Don't allow group members to challenge directly the answers of other group members. The answers presented herein, are not the final answers. These answers serve as a guide.

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About Us

South Pacific Christian Ministries is a Non-Denomination Missions Oriented Ministry that sprang out of a small tourist focused church in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii. After 16 years serving as the Senior Pastor the LORD redirected our steps from the little chapel by the sea to the small island communities of the South Pacific.

Our Vision is to bring the living water to the small islands of the South Pacific; a vision summed up in the Hawaiian phrase Ke Ola Wai, which means the living water. Ke Ola Wai encompassing our greatest spiritual and physical need, pure spiritual and physical water.

Our Mission is to meet the spiritual and physical needs of the people who live on the small islands of the South Pacific that can only be reached by boat. To bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to their shores, assisting local Pastors, providing Bible Training for believers and conducting outreaches to draw in non-believers. To provide gravity fed, family sized, reverse osmosis water filters; emergency medical supplies; medical services; and disaster response training.



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Summary

When is an elephant in a room not seen? When we choose to ignore it. The unseen elephant in the room is there making noise, breaking things and leaving piles behind that smell. Our refusal to see the elephant does not make it leave or cause it not to cause problems. If you leave an elephant in your living room long enough it, sooner or later, it will squash you or some one you love. Dark strongholds in our hearts, such as shame, sin and lies held as truth are all the elephants in our lives. Before you can remove them you must choose to see them. Before you can remove them you must embrace the truth that they try to hide. God has provided you with a mighty Elephant gun, called the Holy Bible. Are you ready to hunt elephants? This study will help you identify the elephants in your life and equip you to deal with them.



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Leaders Guide

In order to identify and deal with the elephants in our life we must first gain understanding of the tools required, learn to trust them, and learn to use them effectively. These tools are readily available. A weapon that you do not know or trust is not a weapon you can reliably use.

Our elephant hunting weapons are the Word of God and our relationship with God. God's Word, the Holy Bible, provides the truth required to see the elephants and to deal with them, replacing lies with truth. Our relationship with God, built through His Word and through regularly talking with Him, builds our faith and understanding. That is with Him, not at Him. Most people talk at God and never take a moment to listen to what He has to say.

In order to effectively use God's Word against the elephants in our life, we must understand it and trust it. We must accept it as the measure for what is true without exception. God's Word is the Absolute Truth. Which means it does not change and does not require anything else to confirm it. Just because society declares something is true, does not mean God's Word must change. His Word changes society, not the other way around.

God's Word defines our relationship with Him, including what is required to enter into that relationship and maintain it. God's Word describes who He is, what He has done, and what He will do. His Word defines who a believer is through Jesus Christ and in Him. God's Word also defines what will occur in the future.

God's Word has the power and authority to change reality. Circumstances and nature must conform to what God says.

Genesis 1:3

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

Questions

- 1) Did light exist prior to God saying "Let there be light"?
 - Until He spoke it into being, nothing existed.
- 2) What all did His command include?
 - The creation of every form of light, including those things that produce light, such as the sun and the other stars. (The sun is a star.) It also included how light behaves; its nature and structure.

{ Side Note: Many assume that the age of the universe is determined by the distance of the objects in space and the time it takes that light to reach us. That assumption is based on those beams of light starting from that point and proceeding to where we are currently at. The God who could speak light into existence, could also cause those beams of light from the stars and distant galaxies that fill our sky to span that distance when they were created. }

Isaiah 55:10-11

- 10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:
- 11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

God's Word has the power and authority to do that which He has declared. It can not be stopped. It can not be held back. If He has said something, then it will come to pass.

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Question

- 3) What does it mean for us, that His Word must do what He has declared?
- We can trust His Word. If He has said it, then it will come to pass. If He has said it, then He will do it.

We live in a world where most people will fail to do what they say they will do and most lie at one time or another. Sometimes their failure to keep their word is intentional and sometimes it is not. Most people will take the word of others with a healthy degree of scepticism. When it comes to people in general, caution regarding their word is wise. The problem comes when we equate man's word with God's Word; man's character with His character.

Numbers 23:19

- 19 God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

Question

- 4) What does it mean for you, personally, that God can not lie?
- It means that we can trust what He says and expect Him to keep His promises. We can expect to see happen what He has said will come to pass.

The fact that God can not lie means we can expect Him to do what He said He will do. We can know, without doubt, that what He has said and will say is an unchangeable truth. The degree to which we believe that God's Word is the Absolute Truth is the degree to which we will see it function in our lives.

A lack of trust in His Word and equating God's promises to man's promises are an elephants. They are means by which other elephants come in and they also one that will hide other elephants. It takes the truth to see the elephants that steal and destroy our lives. It takes God's Word.

John 8:31-32

- 31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;
- 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

A lie can function as a chain, filter or road block. A lie binds you and imprisons you. A lie can cause you to make a mistake or fail to receive what is yours. A lie is a thief that takes what belongs to you. A lie can shape how you see yourself and others. The only way to eliminate a lie that you hold to be true is to learn the truth and reject the lie. Truth shines a light on lies and breaks their power over you; that is, as long as you accept that truth as truth.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

- 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:
- 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)
- 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Question

- 5) What are the strong holds in our life?
- Lies that we hold to be true.

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By definition, a stronghold is a fortified position that is strongly defended or upheld. A stronghold can be a physical location, such as a military base or castle. A stronghold can be an opinion, such as a political point of view. A stronghold can be a belief based in truth or not. A stronghold is something that blocks attempts to dismantle that which it protects.

When a stronghold is a lie it can protect other lies that we hold to be true. A lie, for example about who God is, protects lies about who we are, what God has for us, what He will do for us and what He has done for us. As long as the one lie remains in place, then the other lies are protected.

Genesis 3:1-6

- 1 Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?
- 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:
- 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.
- 4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:
- 5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.
- 6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

In order to get Eve to accept the big lie, the serpent had to get her to accept a different lie. Eve's lack of knowledge of God's Word and her lack of trust in His Word enabled the serpent's lie to find a foothold. When Eve added to what God had said, her words declared that she did not believe that God's Word was enough in itself. That lack of faith and knowledge, then caused her to accept the lie that God had lied. She accepted the lie that she was not created in God's image and that what God had said would not come to pass. She was already like God (Genesis 1:25-26), so eating the fruit and accepting the lie could only make her less than who she was.

One lie became a stronghold and established entrance for all of the other lies. Had she stuck with just what God had said, and stood on His Word against the serpent's lies she would not have sinned. Had Adam stuck with God's Word against Eve's words and the circumstance that Eve appeared to be fine, even though she had eaten the forbidden fruit, then he would not have sinned. Their sin came through doubting God's Word and accepting lies as truth.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

- 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:
- 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)
- 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

In the passage above, imaginations are any belief or thought that comes against God's Word. In other words, a lie. A lie that we hold to be true is an elephant, causing destruction in our life and that of those around us.

Question

- 6) How do you cast down a strong hold or vain imagination?
 - We find what God's Word says about the situation and accept that as truth, denouncing the lies in the process.



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Once we have allowed through unbelief or a lack of knowledge a lie to establish a stronghold in our life, then only was to deal with it is with God's Word, the Absolute Truth. If we apply His Word to every lie that we hold to be true we destroying the power of that lie.

It is vital that we remember and believe that regardless of the situation or circumstance we must accept God's Word over what appears to be. Circumstances and present situations are temporary. God's Word is eternal. God's Word has the power and authority to change our circumstances and situations, not the other way around.

God's Word is our elephant gun and the only way to effectively deal with them. We must deal with every lie that we hold to be true.

Question

- 7) Is every thought that is contrary to God's Word or ways a lie that we hold to be true?
- No, the enemy is often trying to get believers to accept a lie.

Not every thought that passes through our minds represents a lie that we hold to be true. The enemy is often trying to get believers to accept their lies. The problem comes from accepting or entertaining those lies.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

- 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:
4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)
5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

We must deal with thoughts and the words of others that contradict God's Word. That can be as simple as thinking "Not true" or as complex as quoting or looking up scriptures that contradict the lies. That is the process for casting down vain imaginations and destroying elephants.

Psalms 51:6

- 6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

The inward parts are those areas of our heart, our minds, that we expose to few people, if anyone. Thoughts that we do not share with others. Our secret desires or dreams, good or bad. Our ambitions, how we see ourselves, and how we view others. Even thoughts or desires that are ungodly that we might battle from time to time. These are all inward parts of our heart and mind.

Questions

- 8) What can be hidden in the inward parts of our hearts?
- His truth
 - Lies that we have accepted as truth.
- 9) Why would God desire truth in our inward parts?
- Because He knows that it is the secret things that can trip us up.
- 10) What are the dangers of neglecting the inward parts?
- We can find ourselves continuing to walk in bondage instead of freedom, even walk away from God.



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As we learn His Word and accept as absolute truth, then it begins to fill those hidden areas of our heart and mind. In short, we grow from someone controlled by the flesh to someone who walks in and by the Holy Spirit. We go from being chained by lies, to walking in freedom through His Word.

John 8:31-32

- 31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;
- 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Only God's Word makes us truly free, by exposing the lies that we hold to be true. The lies that have hindered and chained us; keeping us from becoming all that He created us to be; keeping us from knowing the freedom that is only available through Him.

Questions

11) Can you accept a lie as a truth without knowing it?

- Any lie can appear true when you do not know the truth. A lack of understanding of God's Word, God's ways and God's character exposes us to being deceived by lies.

It is the truth that you know that exposes the lies. A bank teller is taught to study real money. Their knowledge of how a real bill is to look like enables them to spot the fake ones. Knowing God's Word enables you to spot a lie, regardless of how much truth it is wrapped up in. You might not be able to pin point what is wrong at first, but you will know something is wrong. That knowledge then allows you to search out the error or hidden lie.

Ministers, friends and family may from time to time speak something that contains a lie. Your knowledge of God's Word will enable you to spot it. Your relationship with God will enable you to stand against the onslaught of lies, circumstances and attacks that seek to plant seeds of doubt in your heart. Your relationship with God and your knowledge of His Word will enable you to keep your trust in Him, regardless of what is going on or coming against you.

Questions

12) Where are un-Godly strongholds established?

- Within our heart and mind - behavioral patterns and thought patterns.

Some strongholds get establish during our youth by the words of authority figures, negative circumstances, attacks against us. What seems harmless can still plant lies in our hearts.

It is common for parents to tell children the lie of Santa Clause or the Easter Bunny. Parents often say it is a harmless story and that it is okay for the children to enjoy it. The truth is it instills in children that authority figures lie and can not be trusted, and that supernatural beings are not real. Those strongholds become the first lie that must be dealt with when it comes to a relationship with God. God is a supernatural being who is real and He is an authority figure who never lies.

Shame is a major elephant established through sin, self doubt, lack of knowledge, failure, physical appearance, or harm that was done to you. Shame is established through lies about you and about God. Shame is a prison cell or chain that will hinder all that you do until you are free from it.

Questions

13) Is shame a stronghold?

- Yes. A stronghold is anything, truth or lie that we hold to be true.



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Questions

14) What other causes of shame?

- Having sin or error identified.
A lack of self worth and lack of revelation of your true identity in Christ.
Un-forgiveness for our own failures
Inability to accept truth of God's Word.
Inability to accept the fact that Jesus Christ paid the complete price.
Inability to understand that your abilities, your righteousness come from Jesus.

15) Can shame be based on something that someone else did to us and not what we did ourselves?

- Yes. Shame can be created in someone by imparting a curse of worthlessness or lack of value through words or actions.

16) How does shame hold you back?

- Shame causes you to believe that you are not qualified or worthy. Shame veils or covers you ability to fully relate to what redemption and forgiveness affords you through Christ Jesus.

17) How do you deal with shame?

- Replace the lie of little self worth, lack of qualification or unworthiness with the truth of God's Word. Pull down the stronghold with God's Word and the power of the Holy Spirit. It is by the Light of God's Word that we are enabled to see the lie and are empowered to abolish the power that lie holds over us.

18) What do you do with an elephant in your house?

- Recognize it and find the truth that enables you to cast it out.

By accepting and establishing the Truth, you are establishing the Throne of God within your mind, heart and soul. You establish a Godly stronghold that will enable you to ward off the lies of the enemy. His Word transforms you into the person that He created you to be. His Word equips you to deal with any hidden elephants that remain.

Listed below are common elephants:

The belief that a past failure is unforgivable.

We are all imperfect. We stumble and fail. We make wrong decisions. Sometimes we sin in deed or thought. These events are not unforgivable. Don't let the enemy get you to believe that the cross was not enough for you.

A deep wound that causes you to end relationships or hinders your relationship with God.

Deep wounds are often the most destructive hidden elephants. They raise their heads when the potential for a re-wounding comes near. If you find yourself in this type of situation, ask God to show you the hidden wound. He will enable you to find the healing that you need in the right way.

The belief that a negative event was due to our sin.

While there are times, when our actions are the cause of a negative event. Typically, that is not the case. It may be just an attack by the enemy. Negative circumstances are the result of the enemy. We can open a door to such events, but you know when you have done so. For example, you cheat on your spouse which results in a failed marriage. The end result was caused by your choice. If something is the result of your actions, you can trust God to make it clear. He will always forgive if you seek forgiveness.



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Holding Unforgiveness towards other people.

People will disappoint and hurt us, because they are as imperfect as we are. Sometimes people do things that are a serious offense, harming us and greatly angering God. Their actions can cause deep wounds in our hearts and even physical scars. Our forgiveness does not mean a declaration that what they did was okay. Our forgiveness releases that offense for us and clears the way for God to bring healing in our hearts. Unforgiveness blocks our forgiveness and that is sometime none of us can afford.

Shame due to real or perceived personal failures or sin.

As discuss already, shame, believing that something disqualifies you from His cleansing blood, is a lie to be cast down. Shame will greatly hinder your relationship with God and with others.

Holding an Offense Against God.

The enemy is always trying to drive a wedge between us and God. They know that if they can establish an offense in our heart against God, then we will not trust Him nor turn to Him in a time of need. They also know that as long as we are offended at God we are less of a threat to them. A believer who knows and accepts God's Word as truth is a serious threat to the enemy.

Lies about ourselves that we hold to be true

Nearly everyone has dwelt or will deal with lies about who they are. The enemy wants to paint you as something less to keep you from becoming who God created you to be. Learning about what His Word says regarding who we are, enables us to deal with the lies and replace them with the truth.

There are many other common elephants, but the ones above are common. All of them can be exposed and defeated through God's Word.

Habitual sin, hidden or not, is another elephant. Sin, in particular habitual sin, will rob us of our relationship with God and hinder our growth in Him. Sin is a choice. True repentance is the solution. That means to choose to not sin. Pursuing a deep and sincere relationship with God is a powerful deterrent to habitual sin. Just as any lie, the lie that you can not stop or you that you have no control over the sin only has power until you apply the truth. If your desire is to do that which is right before God, because of His love for you, then can overcome any habitual sin. God will enable you to become free from the sin is you sincerely desire to do so and simply ask Him.

Take time to examine your heart. If you find that you are dealing with any of these elephants, search the Word for what He has to say about it. Take the truth and declare it against the lies. That is how you expose and destroy elephants.



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Study Questions

Answer the following questions, using scripture to support your answers where appropriate. The goal is to gain understanding, not to adhere to short, pat answers. Don't limit yourself to the space on the page between questions. Write your answers on a separate sheet if necessary. Do not include answers based on the books that are not part of the Bible. The opinions of man and blending the works of man, in particular false books, will hinder your walk and understanding.

Read

Genesis 1 - 3

Isaiah 55:10-11

Numbers 23:19

John 8:31-32

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Psalm 51:6

Questions

- 1) Did light exist prior to God saying "Let there be light"?
- 2) What all did His command include?
- 3) What does it mean for us, that His Word must do what He has declared?
- 4) What does it mean for you, personally, that God can not lie?
- 5) What are the strong holds in our life?
- 6) How do you cast down a strong hold or vain imagination?
- 7) Is every thought that is contrary to God's Word or Ways a lie that we hold to be true?
- 8) What can be hidden in the inward parts of our hearts?
- 9) Why would God desire truth in our inward parts?
- 10) What are the dangers of neglecting the inward parts?



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- 11) Can you accept a lie as a truth without knowing it?
- 12) Where are un-Godly strongholds established?
- 13) Is shame a stronghold?
- 14) What are other causes of shame?
- 15) Can shame be based on something that someone else did to us and not what we did ourselves?
- 16) How does shame hold you back?
- 17) How do you deal with shame?
- 18) What do you do with an elephant in your house?