

How to Win the Real Fight for Your Family

Remember *The Waltons*? A popular TV series when I was a teenager, it was set in the mountains of Virginia in the 1930s. A very large family with many children lived in one house, farming the land, eating large meals each night and working hard for their father's small lumber business. There was a time when this show typified real-life America, back in the days when Dad worked, Mom raised the kids, and the children were well disciplined, respected their elders, and worked hard from an early age on the farm.

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Obviously things have changed. Mom and Dad both work to make ends meet; the children are placed in day care and school during the week and are entertained with mobile devices, TV, movies and the Internet; and family members travel on separate paths, often preventing quality family time.

Then there is the ever-present problem of teen rebellion that moves through America's families like spreading leprosy in the ancient homes in Israel. If a family consists of two children, it's likely that one is compliant and the other is defiant—or one is cooperative and the other rather inoperative. Most parents with numerous children understand the oddity that often one child tends to encounter more struggles, to battle more addictions or to rebel.

The cause for this can always be traced back to Satan's plans to "kill, steal and destroy" (John 10:10). From the very first family on Earth, from succeeding in getting Cain to murder his

own brother, the devil's prime target has been the family unit. Simply put, Satan hates families. He will do whatever he can to bring about tension, division, strife and pain. His mission is to tear apart your family.

The devil has done well in today's Western culture to devalue and destroy the family unit. But amid the culture wars over abortion, so-called "same-sex marriage," divorce and other hot-button issues, often we can forget that the real battle begins in the spirit realm. As parents, we deal with many forms of satanic attacks during our lifetimes—some overt, others subtle. Most can be overcome through wise decisions and prayer. But the Lord has given us specific spiritual weapons and tactics we can use against the enemy of our souls to win this fight for our family.

Four Common Weapons

What would you say is the most powerful spiritual weapon to remove the authority and influence of the adversary from your home and your life? If I asked a group of Spirit-filled believers that question, most would offer these four answers:

- 1) Quoting Scripture.
- 2) Experiencing the anointing.
- 3) Rebuking the devil.
- 4) Having strong faith.

Each of these is an important and invaluable weapon in the family fight against Satan. Every believer should carry the sword of the Spirit and be dedicated to knowing God's Word. But even Satan knows the Bible well enough to quote from it (Matt. 4:1-10), and he's assigned his own false prophets to use the Scriptures for their own deceptive, false teaching. So

is this spiritual weapon enough to defeat the enemy when even he uses it from time to time?

Some Pentecostals or charismatics believe that a powerful anointing is the main weapon that will defeat the enemy. I once heard a noted TV minister make a statement that sent shivers down my spine. He screamed over a microphone, "I'm so anointed that the devil can't touch me!" A few weeks later, he began encountering a series of attacks against his ministry that were almost unbearable.

The anointing is a great gift that accompanies a Spirit-filled life. However, King David made an interesting observation when he said, "I am weak today, though anointed king" (2 Sam. 3:39). When Christ was baptized, the Holy Spirit came upon Him and led Him into the wilderness where He was tested by the devil (Matt. 4:1). The anointing does not exempt you from attack but, in fact, can actually attract attack.

After all, Satan was originally the anointed cherub. He certainly understands the power of the anointing. It takes the anointing to break the yokes of sin (Is. 10:27); however, the anointing is not a barrier to prevent attacks.

So what about rebuking the enemy? Will that defeat the devil in our homes? Jesus rebuked the storm (Matt. 8:26), demons (Matt. 17:18) and sickness (Luke 4:39). His disciples followed His example by rebuking Satan, as seen when they attempted to rebuke the spirits in an epileptic child (Mark 9:17-19). But even they learned later that some spirits respond only to fasting and prayer (Matt. 17:21). The hindrance with the epileptic child had been the disciples' own unbelief.

Fasting and prayer would have increased their faith and authority level over the powers of the enemy. I must confess that there have been times when I have rebuked the enemy, and at that particular moment I didn't see any direct response. Perhaps it was weak faith or a weak confession (Heb. 10:23).

So, then, does that mean faith is the greatest weapon against the enemy? In the '80s there was a strong Word of Faith movement in which ministers taught and emphasized the message of faith and personal confession. The emphasis on the faith message was either received or criticized as extreme by many Christians in North America. Those who became engulfed in the message often taught that any sickness, financial difficulty or problem was a result of a lack of faith.

While studying this subject, I read James 2:19: "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!" Suddenly I realized that demons have more faith than some alleged Christians. Demons believe that Jesus is the Son of God, yet some religious folks don't (Luke 4:41). Demons know Christ can heal, yet many preachers preach that miracles have ceased. The kingdom of darkness believes in the abyss, and demons know they're going there, but many Christians deny the existence of hell (Luke 8:31). It is a sad commentary when fallen spirits, which are doomed for eternity to perdition, have more faith in God, Christ and the power of God than some theologically lame unbelieving believers.

The Most Important Weapon

Early in the life of Christ, when the Roman soldiers slew all the infants they found in Bethlehem, Satan made an attempt to kill Jesus. Men in His hometown of Nazareth attempted to throw Christ off a cliff (Luke 4:29-30). Later a storm struck the Sea of Galilee when Christ was in a boat that became full of water yet never sank—another attempt by Satan to kill Christ (Mark 4:37-38). On another occasion men planned to stone Christ when He claimed to be the Son of God, but again He escaped (John 10:31-39). During the 42 months of Christ's earthly ministry, we can see the invisible hand of the enemy guiding the subtle attacks against Christ. On one occasion—in

the Garden of Gethsemane—Satan himself was present, but not even he had any influence or control over the situation.

In John 14:30, Jesus tells His disciples, “I will not talk with you much more, for the prince (evil genius, ruler) of the world is coming. And he has no claim on Me. [He has nothing in common with Me; there is nothing in Me that belongs to him, and he has no power over Me]” (AMP).

Christ was identifying Satan as the prince of this world (2 Cor. 4:4). Jesus knew He was about to endure the most agonizing hours of His life. The sins of the world were being placed upon Him in the garden (2 Cor. 5:21), and the sinless Lamb of God was feeling the burden of the entire world upon Him. Prior to these three hours in the garden, Christ wanted His disciples to know that the enemy was coming, but what they were about to see was not Satan attacking Him. It was the plan of God—not Satan. The adversary was coming, but he had no hold on Christ, nothing in Him and no power over Him. This was one moment that Satan had no power over Christ, because the sin placed on Christ was not His own but the sins of others being placed upon Him.

Our greatest weapon is the power of righteousness, or being in right standing with God. Satan could not hold on to Christ and had no power over Him as Christ was walking free from sin (John 14:30). When we are free from walking in sin, we are also free from guilt and condemnation, which is one of Satan’s most powerful tools to stop our confidence in our relationship with God (1 John 3:20-21). If we abide in sin, the enemy holds on to us. But if we walk in obedience to God and abide in Christ, we wield the most powerful weapon in our daily spiritual arsenal.

A Threefold Response

So how do we walk in righteousness? How do we not allow sin to enter our homes and give the enemy a foothold into our family? Since every living person is a spirit, soul and body, the attacks of the enemy will manifest against our spirit, soul and body. Yet God has provided a spiritual action that will impact each individual area of our tripartite temple. Let's cover the three fundamental ones:

1) Repent and come to Christ. Just as Satan had nothing to hold Christ with in the garden, so repentance will shut the door on the access the enemy has in our spirits. To repent not only means to be regretful or sorry for your actions, but it also means to turn and to change your mind about your destination. We must teach our children—however old—not just to ask for forgiveness but to plan on a new lifestyle, new friends and an exciting journey free from the sins and bondages of their past.

2) Renew your mind from the world's corruption. Scripture teaches that we must be “renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Eph. 4:23). W.E. Vines comments on Ephesians 4:23: “The renewal here mentioned is not that of the mind itself in its natural powers of memory, judgment and perception, but ‘the spirit of the mind,’ which under the controlling power of the indwelling Holy Spirit directs its bent and energies God-ward in the enjoyment of fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, and of the fulfillment of the will of God.”

3) Resist the enemy, and he will flee. James encourages us to, “Submit yourselves, therefore, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (4:7). The word *resist* is used nine times in the New Testament in the King James Version. The word means “to stand against and oppose.”

So how do we resist or oppose the enemy? It begins and ends with recognizing the blood we carry as believers.

Let me explain with a story.

In the early 1990s, while ministering in Peru, I was welcomed into the house of a man who was a wealthy architect and had recently become connected with a local Peruvian congregation. As I was sleeping in bed, lying on my stomach, suddenly I felt the pressure of a fully grown man lying on my back, with each part of his body pressing against me. He felt as though he weighed 200 pounds or more. Suddenly I heard this being speak Spanish in my ear. There was one weird fact: No man was in the room, and this was not a literal person or human—it was some type of a demonic presence that had manifested in the room!

I immediately rebuked the spirit in Christ's name and felt it lift. I turned over in the bed, not knowing what to do next. The Holy Spirit impressed me to stand up and confess the authority of Christ's blood over the wall, doors and windows of the bedroom. I did this boldly, saying, "I confess the protective power of Christ's blood on this wall ... then that wall ... and I command the evil spirits not to enter this room again as long as I am sleeping here!" Then I lay back down and went to sleep.

Months later I learned that the owner of the house had been involved in the gay lifestyle and that many men had stayed in his home continually. I believe the spirit I encountered was familiar with certain local men and was making itself manifest to us during my stay. Regardless, the situation taught me about the power in pleading or confessing the Blood of Christ over a situation.

When a person receives the redemption covenant called salvation (Luke 1:77) and is born again (John 3:3) and redeemed (1 Pet. 1:18), that person enters into the covenant through the blood of Christ (v. 19). When a sinner is convicted by the Holy Spirit and repents and asks Christ into his or her life, that individual does not see or experience an angel of the Lord bringing the literal blood of Christ to repaint the heart and doorway. However, a real, very literal transformation occurs when you confess the Lord Jesus with

your mouth.

This confession causes Christ to remove the guilt of sin and replace it with the peace of God (Rom. 8:1). Christ, who is our High Priest in the heavenly temple (Heb. 9:23-28), bears in His hands, feet and side the scars of His work of redemption for you (John 20:25-27).

The removal of the presence of sin is very real and literal. However, the Blood is applied through the confession of your faith. Many old-timers understood this and would resist the authority of the adversary by speaking in faith the name of Christ and confessing the blood of Christ over their children, homes and families.

We would do well to remember this. We do not oppose the devil in our natural strength; instead, we "submit to God," as James says, claiming the authority and power He has given us through Jesus' blood.

In the natural, the human immune system is designed to fight off germs and viruses that could weaken the body. When the immune system is weakened, the body is more susceptible to sickness. Yet what is the key to a healthy immune system? The blood.

As it is in the physical realm, so it is in the spiritual. We are only able to fight off the attacks of the enemy through Jesus' blood, which restores us to right standing with God and presents us as righteous before Him.

There are people who raise dangerous and deadly reptiles, including snakes. Some have been bitten so many times that their blood has built up immunities to the poison. When the sins of the world were laid upon Christ, He experienced a bite from the serpent. However, the precious blood of Christ became immunized against the power of sin, and when we receive His Blood through faith and redemption, sin no longer has dominion in our body and spirit.

Enforcing the Victory

God has given us many other weapons and tactics in the spiritual battle over our families (see “How to Change the Atmosphere in Your Home”). All of them are powerful and effective tools we can not only possess, but also wield every day in the ongoing war against Satan. In and of themselves, they are not what saves us—only God does that. But by His divine plan, God has appointed us as partners with Him to claim victory over the enemy. First John 5:18 reminds us that, “We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.”

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We must abide in Christ, walking sinless and wielding the weapon of righteousness through His Blood. As we fight this battle with or on behalf of those in our family, we can claim not only God’s protection, but His victory and abundant blessings.

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