

4 Keys to Demolishing the Demonic Attack Coming Against You

World War II was the biggest and bloodiest war in the history of the planet. More than 30 nations were involved in the battle for six years, starting with the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939 under the leadership of Adolf Hitler. Historians estimate that between 40 and 50 million people died because one man sought to rule as a demonically empowered false god over many nations.

At the war's conclusion, despite Hitler's suicide and his successor Karl Dönitz's signed surrender, individual skirmishes continued. As is often the case in war, some German soldiers kept fighting long after their nation was defeated and the triumphant nations had cleaned up their victory parades. Some refused to accept the reality that their kingdom had fallen. Others did not care that they were defeated and simply wanted to inflict as much pain and death as they possibly could.

The war between God and Satan is much like World War II. At the cross of Jesus Christ, Satan was defeated. But skirmishes rage on until our King returns to once and for all round up the rebellious people and spirits and sentence them to an eternal prison as His kingdom overtakes every nation of the earth. These skirmishes in your life are not the big battle—King Jesus already won that! Your battles are fought in the context of a war that is over with a foe who is defeated and will ultimately be disarmed and destroyed.

We were snuggled up on the couch watching television late one night, flipping back and forth between channels. When watching the History Channel, even though the program showed footage of

World War II with building suspense, we were not anxious or alarmed. On the other hand, as we watched real-time footage on the news channel, we were noticeably more agitated and anxious. Why? We know the ending for the old news but not for the current news, which caused us to respond differently.

For God, everything is the History Channel, and nothing is the nightly news. God sees everything in its finished state and invites us to trust Him for a happily-ever-after ending for all of His people. To walk with Jesus is to march in the angelic army with the God who overcomes the world. We are to believe this by “our faith” until we see it by sight as God does.

The enemy and his empire are crumbling and will be crushed. Knowing this and by faith believing that the Bible accurately records the end of history will give you the courage you need to win your wars. In our daily battles against sin, Satan tries to tempt us to join his army. He wants us to hate others rather than love others, hurt others rather than help them and punish them rather than share the good news that Jesus was already punished for them. This not only harms them but also harms us, as we experience anxiety instead of peace, angst instead of joy and acrimony instead of harmony.

Not only is Satan a deceiver, but he has also apparently deceived himself into thinking he can rewrite the storyline of the Bible and defeat God once and for all. This might explain why Satan continues to wage war even though the Bible is clear that he loses in the end.

Nevertheless, the same Jesus who defeated the devil in His first coming will finally destroy the devil in His Second Coming.

Four Keys

Our King Jesus said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28:18b). If you belong to Jesus

Christ, you need to believe the following four things so you can exercise the authority He delegated to you as you wage your war.

1. You have clearly moved from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light.

When you were born, you were born into the world system, which is a counterfeit kingdom at war against the kingdom of God since “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19b, ESV).

When you were born again of the Holy Spirit, your citizenship transferred from this world to the kingdom. Your residence may still be in this world, but your citizenship is in heaven, as “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son” (Col. 1:13).

Furthermore, King Jesus protects you in this enemy territory: “We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him” (1 John 5:18).

For Christians, this life is as close to hell as we will ever be; it is as bad as it will ever get. Conversely, for non-Christians, this life is as close to heaven as they will ever be; it is as good as it will ever get.

2. Demonic or satanic attacks are not uncommon.

In school, we study the history of wars; in church, we study the war behind the wars. Not only are soldiers marching into battle throughout history, but so are spirits. Like physical soldiers, demon warriors are skilled persons who communicate, possess great intelligence, have emotions that drive them and have a will by which they make tactical decisions (Luke 4:31-37, 8:28-30; Mark 1:23-24, 27).

When two nations are at war, every citizen is also involved in

that war. When an enemy army marches into a town, the residents find themselves under siege for the simple reason that there is a war and everyone is on one side or the other.

In wars, only the noteworthy warriors become legends. The Bible names some of these demonic warriors:

Baal (Num. 25:1-5) and other demons working together as the Baals (Judg. 2:11-13), which also called the host of heaven (2 Kings 21:3).

Ashtaroth/Asherah (2 Kings 17:16).

Chemosh (1 Kings 11:7).

Molech (Lev. 18:21).

Artemis (Acts 19:24-35).

Legion (Mark 5:9).

Hermes (Acts 14:8-18).

Zeus (Acts 14:8-18).

Dike, also called Justice (Acts 28:1-6).

Castor and Pollux, the twin gods (Acts 28:11).

Kiyyun, the star-god (Amos 5:26).

The queen of heaven (Jer. 7:18, 44:17-19).

Lilith, also called the night creature or screech owl (Isa. 34:14).

We also see the princes of Persia and Greece at spiritual war with the Lord's angels in Daniel 10. As with any army, we do not know the names of most of the enemy troops as there are many demonic "unknown god(s)" (Acts 17:23).

New Testament scholar Clinton Arnold has noted that in

addition to the named demons in Scripture, “one scholar has counted 123 different demons identified by name in the rabbinic literature.”

The Bible also speaks of demons in terms of dangerous beasts, starting with Satan as a serpent/dragon and a lion (Rev. 20:2, 1 Pet. 5:8); other demons called such things as a python spirit (Acts 16:16-18) and goat demons (2 Chron. 11:15, Isa. 34:14); and wild animals, including ostriches, bulls, hyenas, birds and scorpions (Isa. 13:21, Ps. 22:12-13, Luke 10:17-20). This is not surprising, as the Bible also refers to evil people, in addition to evil spirits, in animalistic terms such as vipers, serpents, goats, cows, dogs, wolves, leeches, donkeys and evil beasts. This might also mean that the “wild beasts” Paul fought in Ephesus were actually people operating by demonic powers (1 Cor. 15:32, NIV).

Demonic attack is constant, often seducing the flesh within us because we are living in the midst of a war that has been raging since it erupted in heaven. Knowing about this war can cause panic, but God invites you to cast “all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world” (1 Pet. 5:7-9, ESV).

There is no place you can go to avoid this battle since the war is waged throughout the world. But the fact that you are sometimes under attack should oddly comfort you. A loyal subject of the king is the most likely target in a war. If you are loyal to King Jesus, then it is normal to walk through a demonic minefield now and then.

3. You come with the authority of your king.

Sometimes as a guilty pleasure, we will watch a few minutes of

the television show *Cops*. Full disclosure: Mark has had at least one cousin on the show, and he was not one of the cops. We have noticed that something curious happens in episode after episode. Someone who is raging and out of control suddenly changes his or her behavior once a police officer shows up on the scene. Often, the person committing the crime simply surrenders.

Why?

Because the cop shows up with the full authority of an entire police force. When someone with more authority shows up, you must surrender. You can do this willingly by getting on the ground and throwing your hands up, or you can do this unwillingly by getting slammed on the ground and having your hands wrenched behind your back for handcuffs. Either way, when someone with higher authority shows up, you will surrender.

When a demon comes into your life, it does not need to surrender to you. You have no authority apart from Jesus. Every demon must submit to Jesus because He has all authority.

No one and nothing has authority equal to Jesus Christ. Today Jesus is at the right hand of the Father "seated ... in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come," with everyone and everything "under his feet" (Eph. 1:20-22).

However, there is more. In Paul's letter to the Ephesians we read that God "raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). The children of God will be seated for all eternity in authority with King Jesus. In fact, a day is coming when God's people will "judge angels" (1 Cor. 6:3b). How staggering is that concept? When all is said and done, God's people will exercise authority over fallen angels for all eternity. Therefore, when a demon

shows up in your life, he is the criminal, you are the cop, and you come in the name and authority of the highest power in all eternity: Jesus.

4. Your defeated enemy has to surrender to your victorious king.

Do you remember the kids' game called "uncle" or "mercy"? The gist of the game is that two kids squeeze one another's hands until one of them surrenders by shouting "uncle" or "mercy."

Satan and demons seem to like playing their own spiritual version of this game. They will bring some sort of trouble, trial or temptation and squeeze until you surrender to them, thereby allowing them to win. Demons want you to believe the lie that they will never stop squeezing until you surrender so you will give up and give in to get it over with as quickly as possible.

The truth is that you do not have to play their game. Rather than surrendering to unholy spirits, you can yield to the Holy Spirit. If you surrender to the Spirit and command the demonic to depart, it must leave you: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). Jesus modeled this. As we surrender to the Spirit, the devil must surrender to Him as well. You do not have to give up or give in. The Spirit of God in you is greater than the demonic spirits against you, and if you do not surrender to the demonic but instead surrender to God, they will also surrender to Him and leave you as they did Jesus.

The Supernatural Power of Spirits

The limitations we have are natural. As created beings with limited energy, we all reach the point where we have depleted ourselves and say things like, "I'm out," "I need a break," "I cannot do any more," "I just need to sit down" and "I've got nothing left to give."

Sound familiar?

Now, consider the different reality in which angels live. Angels do not share in the limits of our humanity. Instead they sing and serve “day and night” (Rev. 4:8b, 7:15b). What is the longest church service, worship event, Christian conference or retreat you have sat through? Even the most devout believer would not be able to hold church and worship God “day and night,” day after day and night after night.

What is true of angels is also true of demons. Satan’s nonstop attack on believers is “day and night” (Rev. 12:10). Demons do not need a nap, a day off, food, water or sleep because they do not get tired or sick.

Do you see the problem for you? If you have human limits, and demonic spirits who attack you do not share those limits, how can you possibly win a war against that foe since “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12)?

To win your war, you cannot fight by your own natural power. A natural person cannot win a spiritual battle against a supernatural demon. No one ever defeated the demonic by his or her own strength. No matter how self-disciplined you are, how hard you try or how tough you may be, eventually the supernatural always defeats the natural.

Sometimes evil people live by the power of demonic forces and have a superhuman energy level. They harass and hound you until you are overwhelmed, exhausted and overtaken. Jesus delivered two “demon-possessed men” who were “so fierce that no one could pass that way” (Matt. 8:28-34). People took the long way around the region where these men lived. Two men controlled an entire region—until Jesus cast their demons out.

In Mark 5:1–20, Jesus encounters “a man with an unclean

spirit.” With demonic strength, “no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones” (vv. 3b–5).

You know you are dealing with a demonized person when they do evil, never grow weary and force everyone else to work around them, to avoid them and to live in fear of them. The only way that you can win your war against demonic power is by the supernatural power of God the Holy Spirit: “Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might” (Eph. 6:10).

Our strength comes from the Lord’s strength and not our own. The Christian life is supernaturally lived “in the Spirit” by God’s power at work for you, in you, and through you. The counterfeit of being Spirit-filled is being demon-possessed. When someone is filled with the unholy spirit, your only defense is to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Spirit-Filled Like Jesus

The only way to win a war against an unholy spirit is by the power of the Holy Spirit, because “you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4b). Jesus Christ models this truth for us.

When God entered history as Jesus Christ, He joined us in our humanity and experienced our limitations. After a long walk through the desert, Jesus sat down at a well to rest because He was tired from the journey (John 4:6). After fasting for 40 days and nights, He was hungry (Matt. 4:2). On the cross, Jesus said, “I thirst” (John 19:28). Jesus’ body was pushed to its human limits.

During His earthly life, Jesus could have made things much

easier for Himself. He could have chosen not to live humbly and endure the limits of humanity, but instead He chose to humble Himself to become like you so that you could become like Him. Jesus was pushed to the limits of humanity as you are.

Prior to His death on the cross, Jesus' greatest spiritual battle was with the devil himself. Knowing Jesus was isolated, hungry, thirsty and tired after 40 days alone fasting in the wilderness, Satan sought to exploit Jesus' humanity. Satan offered the hungry Jesus bread to eat. Satan also offered self-indulgence to meet every physical longing we humans have, such as food, drink, sex, sleep and comfort. The Father offered self-denial to resist every sinful longing and temptation that we face. In all honesty, which path would you choose—the pleasure path of self-indulgence or the pain path of self-denial?

Jesus won His war. How did He do it? Jesus' march into war "was led by the Spirit" (Luke 4:1b). After winning His war, "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit" (Luke 4:14a).

You can win your war by the same power that our Christ did. The supernatural power of the Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of Christ" that "dwells in you" (Rom. 8:9). The same Spirit that empowered the life and Resurrection of Jesus Christ while He was on the earth is available to you.

Often we think of the ministry of the Holy Spirit as being miraculous things, but the Holy Spirit also ministers in the mundane. He is there to help you in times of trouble, trial and temptation so you can live by a supernatural power, the most incredible power source there could possibly be!

Perhaps an illustration will help. While writing a previous book, *Spirit-Filled Jesus*, Mark was under a deadline and had hours of writing time on a flight. He opened his laptop to find that his battery was nearly dead. He was admittedly

frustrated as he had a long flight and lots of work to do to help people learn to live by God's power, but his laptop had no power. His laptop died, and ironically, he spent the remaining hours wishing he had power so he could write about power. To make matters worse, after the flight landed, he dropped a pen. As he bent over to pick it up, he saw that under his seat was a power outlet he had overlooked. Yes, he had an unlimited free power source available that he simply failed to access.

The power of God in the unseen realm is available to God's people in the seen realm through the Holy Spirit. He plugs us into the power of God so we can defeat the same demonic forces that were already defeated at the wars in heaven and on the cross.

Many, if not most, Christians are living life by their own power until they wear down and wear out. The devil and his demons know this, so they beat us down until they bring us down.

Meanwhile, God the Holy Spirit is available as the power source we need to live a life of victory. Sadly, we fail to plug into His power. We often have a far better and more intentional plan to plug our phone or laptop into a power source than we do to keep our soul plugged into the Spirit.

So how should we do that? Prayer, worship, Scripture, fellowship and inviting God's presence and peace—before, during and after our wars. The key to all spiritual war is to overcome our demonic influence. {eo}

Mark and Grace Driscoll have been married and doing ministry together for over 25 years. They planted the Trinity Church with their five kids in Scottsdale, Arizona.

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