

Get Ready to Experience Spiritual Warfare

In C.S. Lewis's book *The Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape writes to his nephew Wormwood:

"I wonder if you should ask me whether it is essential to keep the patient in ignorance of your own existence. That question, at least for the present phase of the struggle, has been answered for us by the High Command. Our policy, for the moment, is to conceal ourselves."

In the front of the book, Lewis says, "There are two mistakes the church makes when dealing with the devil: to blame everything on him or to blame nothing on him."

Research by the Barna Group found that only 26 percent of the general population believes that Satan is a real spiritual being. Belief in the personhood of Satan appears to be gradually dissipating. Only 52 percent of born-again Christians expressed belief that Satan was real. It's no wonder we have a weak church.

Satan wants to kill you and your destiny, which is rooted in God: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8).

The enemy tried to kill Moses at birth and tried to shut his mouth through a stuttering spirit. He tried to kill Jesus at birth and then tempted Him during His 40-day fast. He tries to kill all babies through abortion.

If the devil cannot kill at birth, he will try to kill your destiny through childhood wounds. Whether we are rejected as children through a lack of emotional affirmation, sexually abused or loved only for our performance, our lives become

defined by the wounds we receive when we are young. Satan tries to immobilize humans by wounding them so they spend a lifetime trying to cope with the consequences created by their wound. This is how generational strongholds take root in our lives. Because of childhood wounds, we develop a belief system designed to meet our needs outside God, and we protect ourselves from getting hurt by setting up defense mechanisms.

Satan will always attack you in the place of your spiritual inheritance. Israel was attacked because of its land—the Promised Land from God. Abraham was attacked in his relationships, because a people more numerous than the sands in the desert would come through him. That is why Abraham let his nephew Lot choose the land he was to go to.

Jesus was tempted by Satan to receive power instead of laying His life down for the salvation for mankind. Entrepreneurs are attacked by choosing *good* and a consumptive lifestyle versus *God*. Their inheritance lies in creating businesses to create wealth to establish God's kingdom on earth. I've always been attacked in the area of close relationships because my inheritance is in relationships. Each of us must have a heightened awareness of how Satan will seek to derail our destinies, and we must develop a greater sensitivity to Satan's ploys.

In my own journey, I discovered early wounds that kept me from an intimate relationship with my heavenly Father and those close to me. Satan tried to shut me down early in childhood by shutting down my emotions and verbal ability. Over many years, God showed me where the early wounds originated in order for me to become healed from those wounds. The wounds developed a stronghold of shame, rejection, insecurity, fear and control, which led to an inability to share at a heart level. As healing took place, Satan could no longer make me believe a lie about myself, and I was able to enter into my destiny.

We must recognize the influence the enemy has had in our lives

through generational iniquity. In many cases, we may need to revisit early childhood wounds in order to gain healing and victory in our lives where the sins of our fathers may have gained an entry point into our lives. We may require trained counselors to help us.

However, we cannot remain a victim to these wounds once we become aware they are influencing us. Christ paid the price for any sins brought into our life, whether through us or our parents. It is our job to stop them from passing to other generations.

The apostle Paul understood the spiritual warfare that we are all in, no matter how spiritual we are. He describes this in Romans 7:15: "For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do." When he wrote these words, he had been in the faith 20 years!

In Revelation 12, we find the three primary strategies that Satan employs against humans. He tries to kill, deceive and accuse. Most of the time, he uses other humans to do it. Take a moment and think about these three areas. Think about the times you have felt you were at the point of great despair. Think about the times when you were so totally deceived about God. Beware of the strategies of the enemy to kill, deceive, accuse and destroy you, your relationships with others and, most importantly, your relationship with God.

The apostle Paul speaks of strongholds in 2 Corinthians 10:4-6: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled."

Although Satan is the source of these strongholds, God's grace will enable us to see the consequences of our behavior and

motivate us to find the root causes. We are still responsible for the behavior our stronghold causes and must repent of it. Jesus said the truth will set us free. As you learn the truth about your childhood wounds, God will provide healing that allows you to move forward with Him in your relationship with God and those close to you. Your behavior must begin to change to align with the truth.

The problem for many in the body of Christ today is that we live as if we are not living in a war. We live more like tourists passing through to our destination of heaven. We are not concerned about the casualties of this war, only about getting to our final destination in as pain-free a manner as possible. John Piper once said, "You will not know what prayer is for until you know that life is war." Prayer is the tool of this warfare.

God Fights Through His People

One night I received a particular hateful email from someone close to me. It brought me very low. I could feel Satan trying to bring me into despair through a spirit of accusation. Within five minutes of receiving that email, I got a phone call from a prayer group meeting in Chicago. They had never called me before. They said, "The Lord prompted us that you were going through something very difficult, so we felt we should call and pray for you." They shared a Scripture verse that spoke directly to my situation.

I was reminded of a verse from Isaiah that describes God's ability to fight off any weapons or words that are formed against us if we are in the will of God: "No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn" (Is. 54:17). When people speak against us with lies and there is agreement with others, that is a curse being spoken against us. Our response must be to forgive them and pray for them. That is our defense.

The greater the calling, the greater the warfare and suffering you will experience, but there will be greater revelation of God as well. The apostle Paul understood that his thorn in his flesh was a direct result of the greater call and revelation he was experiencing: "And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure."

The greater the influence, the greater the warfare. There is a target on the back of anyone who is seeking to impact the kingdom of darkness for the kingdom of light. I am convinced there are many posters in hell with my picture on it that read: "Wanted: Os Hillman, Dead or Alive." I have inflicted serious damage to the kingdom of darkness for the last 15 years, and I believe that Satan's measured assaults have intensified to hit the very core of what is most important to me. He may have won some battles, but he won't win the war!

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Eph. 6:12)

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