

Sometimes Spiritual Warfare Isn't Demons—It's Other Christians

I recently shared a meal with a pastor who loves his congregation and works tirelessly to serve his community. But this man was in a spiritual battle. A small group of people in his church were dissatisfied with this pastor's leadership, so they were busy plotting ways to get rid of him.

I'm glad I could encourage with this leader, because people on the front lines of ministry are often hit with negativity that is designed to take them out. I don't want to be the guy who says discouraging words. Instead, I want to hold up my friends' arms, pray for them and say, "You are doing a great job," "Don't listen to those comments" and "Hang in there."

Those of us in the Spirit-filled community talk a lot about spiritual warfare, and we love to identify the demons behind every problem. But I've learned that we give demons too much credit. In many cases, "spiritual warfare" is actually caused by Christians who don't know how to love.

It's true: Christians are guilty at times of gossip, slander, character assassination and other devilish activities that destroy people and churches. The devil and his demons may ultimately be behind it all, but carnal people are the devil's willing pawns. That's why Paul told the Galatians: "If you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another" (Gal. 5:15, NASB).

As we step into this new year, I challenge you to make it your goal to become a loving encourager. Here's how you can avoid being a tool of spiritual destruction: