

Spiritual Judo: Using the Devil's Momentum Against Him

When my daughter was about 13, she was interested in taking self-defense classes. Because she was too young to go to the training center alone—and too old for the children's classes—we decided to take the training together.

We managed to work our way up to green belts before she ultimately lost interest. (For the record, we did not engage in any spiritual practices that are part of some martial arts training.) But I learned some mixed-martial arts lessons that apply to spiritual warfare—and those lessons have served me well.

Put another way, while I was practically learning sidekicks and roundhouse kicks and back kicks, I was also discerning new ways to put my spiritual enemies in strangleholds. Point-blank, I discovered how to use the enemy's momentum against him. Instead of wearing myself out, I learned how to wear the devil out.

Learning What Wearies the Enemy

Daniel 7:25 says the enemy comes to weary the saints, but through my mixed-martial arts experience I learned what wearies the enemy. I stopped growing weary in well-doing when I discovered the enemy grows weary in wicked doing. In other words, if we don't give up—if we keep pressing in—we will eventually outlast the devil. We'll win the wrestling match against principalities, powers and the like (see Eph. 6:12).

James, the apostle of practical faith, tells us to submit ourselves to God, resist the devil and he will flee (James 4:7). The Amplified translation tells us to “stand firm” against him. Sometimes I think there must be a line of demons in single file waiting to take a shot at me because the

submitting and resisting doesn't always seem to work immediately—yet I know the word is true. If we keep submitting and resisting, we will eventually outlast the devil (or devils if they are indeed standing in line waiting their turn to strike).

It's almost like a staring contest. The devil will look away first when the glory of God is shining through you.

I learned the principles of wearing out the enemy through mixed-martial arts, especially judo. The object of judo is to throw down or take down your opponent, immobilize them and force them to submit to your authority. I'm spiritualizing a bit, but that's the gist of it. The enemy wants us to submit to his authority. God wants the enemy to submit to the authority in Christ that He's given us. God expects us to enforce His will in our spheres of influence, and that often means engaging in spiritual battle. Christ won the victory. We enforce it.

Balance Is Vitally Important

In our spiritual warfare, we must remain balanced in more ways than one. First, we don't want to get off into any extreme spiritual warfare strategies that are not grounded in the Word of God. We'll end up in a ditch, or worse—like the seven sons of Sceva (Acts 19:14). Second, we don't want to hyperfocus on the devil—we want to hyper focus on God. Nevertheless, we need to stay watchful. We cannot ignore the devil.

Judo puts a strong focus on balance. If your enemy can get you off-balance, he can throw you. 1 Peter 5:8-9 (AMPC) tells us to:

Be well balanced (temperate, sober of mind), be vigilant and cautious at all times; for that enemy of yours, the devil, roams around like a lion roaring [in fierce hunger], seeking someone to seize upon and devour.

Withstand him; be firm in faith [against his onset—rooted, established, strong, immovable, and determined], knowing that the same (identical) sufferings are appointed to your brotherhood (the whole body of Christians) throughout the world.

Don't let the enemy throw you off-balance with his fiery darts. Don't give your mind over to thoughts of defeat, discouragement or frustration. All of these things will throw you off balance. Instead, stand in the evil day (see Eph. 6:13) and know that God is able to make you stand (see Rom. 14:4).

Using Your Spiritual Momentum

In judo, you use your opponent's momentum against him. At some point in your spiritual battle, the enemy will rise up and charge at you. This is when you can use spiritual momentum by moving in the opposite spirit and watch him fall.

Sometimes your enemies are unseen, but sometimes the unseen enemy works through a person. When people come against you, the carnal mind wants to strike back twice as hard, tell everyone who will listen what they did to you, and otherwise make them pay.

To stand there and take it, to give away even more than what someone is trying to force from your hands, to pray a blessing on the ones who are cursing you ... that, my friends, is called moving in the opposite spirit—and in doing so you use the enemy's momentum to your benefit. Those who live a Sermon on the Mount lifestyle receive all the blessings Jesus promised in His timeless message. When you move in the opposite spirit, you avoid the bondage that the one who strikes you, sues you, takes advantage of you, gives you a hard time or mistreats you in any way, is living in.

You walk free—you walk in power. And if it's a person the

enemy is working through, your response might even set them free, too. We overcome evil with good (see Rom. 12:21). Now, you can't try to move in the opposite spirit, not really. You have to get the revelation of it and move by His grace alone. When we move in the opposite spirit of the ones who come against us, we are moving in the Holy Spirit. And we are using the enemy's momentum for his defeat and our victory. Amen.
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