

Three Faith-Releasing Secrets the Devil Doesn't Want You to Know!

It's time to reset our understanding of faith

In my upcoming book, *Breakthrough Faith: Living a Life Where Anything is Possible* (Destiny Image), I will go into greater depth on what I am sharing right now. The goal of the book is to equip you to activate the supernatural gift that God has already put inside of you. To do this, we need to first correct some of the false ideas and misconceptions we may have surrounding the most important currency in our Christian life: faith.

Think about it. Faith is our faithful companion throughout the Christian life, from the very moment we are born again (we are *saved* by faith) to the day when we depart this world and faith becomes sight. God never intended for your faith to be dormant between salvation and death. I would also take a step further and state that I don't believe God envisioned us constantly working, striving and begging to get more faith.

If we have a wrong view of faith, we are going to miss out on a lot that God has made available to us to victoriously live out the Christian life... *this side of heaven*.

The powerful gift you have already received!

Here is some really good news that I pray will bring you great relief: *You don't need MORE faith*. There's no super-sized faith that we need to constantly be begging God to give us. Remember, the very reason you received faith to begin with was because of God's free and unmerited *grace*. Consider Paul's powerful reminder in Eph. 2:8, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it

is the gift of God" (NIV).

The victorious Christian life is not about getting more faith; it is about learning to use the faith that you *already have been given*. Faith is a gift from heaven, graciously given to every believer. It arms you with the ability to reach into the unseen realm, lay hold of God's promises, and release them into the Earth. Faith is not some tool used for acquiring money, accumulating bling, becoming a Christian celebrity, and racking up the big dollars through manipulative pledge-a-thons. No, we have been given this precious gift for so great and glorious a task: To see the very purposes of God accomplished in the Earth, to see Christ exalted, and to give expression to Who the Father is as impossible situations crumble beneath the powerful Name of Jesus. What an honor that we get to participate in heaven's glorious agenda!

Recognize your adversary

Without recognizing the power we have *already* received, this much I know: We will never stand a chance against the one who desires to steal, kill and destroy us (see John 10:10). You have an enemy, and faith is your key to walking in victory over him.

The great C.S. Lewis wrote concerning the devil in his classic work, *The Screwtape Letters*:

There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.

Such an observation is as relevant today as it was when written.

Three secrets the devil doesn't want you to know

So here they are. Granted, there are many other things the devil doesn't want us to know. Our ignorance is his bliss. But these are three foundational truths that, if we start to grasp them, will spell greater advancement for the Kingdom of God and increased destruction for the influence of darkness.

The devil doesn't want you to know...

1. *That he is real.* The first error that Lewis noted was the state of disbelieving in the very existence of the devil and his demonic cohorts. In many liberal circles within Christianity, there is no acknowledgement of a literal devil, demons, hell or any dark side to the supernatural realm (in fact, liberalism tends to bypass the supernatural as a whole). They are almost regarded as fairy tales. Let's not think that this deception cannot impact us either. The enemy works overtime to make us ignorant of his activity in the world. Even in the contemporary church, I fear at times that our advancements (in technology, relevance, knowledge, etc.) have the potential—if we are not careful—to make us forget the insidious influence of our enemy, Satan. We might have a Statement of Faith that uses some boilerplate theological language to acknowledge our belief in him, but at the same time, we are building a church culture where the realities of spiritual warfare and exorcism are considered downright archaic. As if we had graduated beyond some of the basics of Christianity that Jesus modeled when He walked the Earth! Friends, the devil would like nothing more than to convince us that he is not real, that he is a work of religious fiction. When we buy into such a deception, the consequences are disastrous and far-reaching.

The devil doesn't want you to know...

2. *That he is your enemy... not God's sovereignty at work.*
- This deception is massive in the body of Christ today. The enemy has deceived countless Christians into believing that his diabolical work of stealing, killing and destroying is actually the sovereign hand of God working in someone's life, teaching them a lesson, and ultimately, purposing to make them more holy. Before I respond, I will say this: God is not our cosmic butler. He disciplines. He corrects. He prunes. There is persecution for those who follow Christ. There is a taking up of our cross, denying ourselves, and following Jesus... with a cost. God is holy. He is not some happy-go-lucky "home-boy" deity who lives to slap us a holy high-five. At the same time, we must always remember that our Father in heaven is a good Father. The very displays of darkness that Jesus entered the world to destroy—the works of the devil, according to 1 John 3:8—the devil has convinced so many people that such works of darkness originate from God's hand. Sickness and disease. War. Famine. Disintegration of the family. Torment. Fear. When read in black and white, such things sound horrible. When gussied up in "spiritual" language, they *almost* sound convincing. "God gave me this sickness so that in my weakness, He would receive glory." "I am struggling through this bondage and addiction so that in my frailty, and in my failure, God's glory could be revealed." The last thing I ever want to do is say that people are going through that stuff because "they don't have enough faith." That's the great blemish that has brought horrible disdain to the Truth of walking in victory for victory, healing and deliverance. If you are currently in a place of struggle, I want you to know that God is for you. His hand did not directly bring you into bondage, disease, or torment. He is with you every step of the way. Call upon His Name! He is healer. He is deliverer. When we believe that God is the author of these sufferings, we accept something that God actually

wants us to war against using His Word, Jesus' Name and His authority. When we believe that such struggles come from God's hand, we continue to embrace them as His sovereign will instead of rising up against them. We begin our journey on the path to victory with the simple acknowledgement that we have an adversary... but we also have an Advocate. We have an enemy who wants to destroy us, but we also have a God Who wants to deliver us for His Name's sake!

The devil doesn't want you to know...

3. *That he is not God's equal or rival opponent.* The devil is not God's arch-nemesis. This is not some heavenly "yin-yang" situation. Cartoons give us a false impression of this relationship, when we see the angel on one shoulder of Bugs Bunny and the devil sitting on the other, both trying to influence his decision. That makes it appear both sides are on equal ground. They are not. Sure, the devil would like you to think he is at God's level. He's been trying to push this agenda since the beginning. But the fact is, the devil is not the opposite of God. Paul tells us that God dealt with the devil at the cross, explaining that the work of Christ "disarmed the powers and authorities" and "made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross" (Col. 2:15, NIV). With that in mind, we really must start believing some Bible truths quite literally. For example: "Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4, NASB). If only Adam and Eve had recognized the full expanse of the dominion they had received. Do you remember what God told them? He gave them dominion over everything that creeps on the Earth (see Gen. 1:30). Where was the devil in the beginning? He was creeping on the Earth. Man had authority over the serpent, as he was a created, creeping thing. But man lost authority when he fell into sin. The devil still

creeps upon the Earth. The good news is that because of the cross, authority has been restored to us, and we can walk in victory over him because of the Greater One living inside of us. Our authority is no match for the enemy, but the very authority of Jesus in us will mean his undoing every time!

In writing about this subject, I carefully refuse to veer into the other error that Lewis addressed: “to believe (*in the devil and the powers of darkness*), and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.” We need to live mindful of the enemy’s schemes, for sure.

At the same time, I never want to make darkness my focal point. The Greater One must always be at the center of my gaze. When Jesus is my vision, the powers of darkness are viewed in their proper perspective: Defeated, undone and crushed beneath the nail-scarred feet of our victorious Savior!

Larry Sparks is a conference speaker, blogger, columnist and host of the weekly radio program Voice of Destiny. His new book, Breakthrough Faith: Living a Life Where Anything is Possible, will be released with Destiny Image Publishers on Oct. 21. Featured in Charisma magazine and on CBN’s Spiritual Gifts webcast, Larry is also founder of Equip Culture, a ministry that equips believers with the tools and resources to live victoriously through the supernatural power of God (). You can follow @LarryVSparks on Twitter to receive messages of encouragement and empowerment.