

3 Warning Signs You're Under Fiendish Spiritual Attack

Do you ever find yourself trudging along as if in a fog? Something's off and you can't nail it down. You're swimming through mud and nothing makes sense. Finally the light-bulb goes off in your mind: You're under spiritual attack.

The cloak of darkness over your mind is a common symptom of the fog of war (aptly so named by John Eldredge). Stuff is going on in the unseen realm, and it affects us. Often our most dramatic challenges come after a spiritual high or significant progress, and it can take you down. Understanding what it feels like when under spiritual attack is a wonderful key allowing you to get your fight back.

Jesus said, "The thief does not come, except to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). So if there's stealing, killing, and destroying going on, you can be certain the enemy is at work. Jesus always gives life.

The enemy will use any means he can to mess with us as God's children. Here are three that, if you become alert to them, can save you a great deal of distress.

Three Characteristics of Satan's Attacks

1. Confusion.

God will not usually add His voice to a cacophony of sound in your head, your life, the church or the world at large. He does not use confusion to drive or oppress you. "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (1 Cor. 14:33b). It's the enemy who darkens, messes with and confuses our minds (see 2 Cor. 4:4).

The Holy Spirit may stir up your mind in order to correct some wrong attitude or behavior or to press you forward in your mission for God, but He will never cause a cloud of confusion and darkness in your mind. If that's what you're feeling, it's Satan's work, not God's.

What's the answer? Quit trying to figure things out when your mind is filled with confusion. Don't keep on playing into the enemy's hand and accepting the confusion he is trying to bring. Quite literally, stop thinking! Put up a mental stop sign, and stop.

Distract yourself if need be. Deliberately put your mind somewhere else. Choose somewhere peaceful such as nature, calming music, worshipping God or listening prayer. Let your mind become still, and then you will be able to hear God's voice.

2. Condemnation.

Oh, don't you love the verse, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1a). We are set free!

And yet the Holy Spirit is not finished with us yet. We have growing up to do. Parts of our character need to be changed. The Holy Spirit is the One who convicts us when we sin and need to be corrected.

Condemnation from the enemy and conviction from the Holy Spirit may appear somewhat similar from the outside, but they could not feel more different. And their results are as opposite as life and death.

Condemnation draws you downward. It's hopeless, dark, and holds you in the past. It feels like the end.

Conviction from the Holy Spirit draws you upward. There is hope, light and a focus on your future. It points the way to

receiving God's forgiveness and provides strength to go forward. It feels like the beginning.

If you are feeling condemned in your heart you can know—with absolute certainty—that it is not from God. "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:17). Go back to Scripture. Read John 3:16. Read John 6:37, "He who comes to Me I will never cast out." Read Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Choose to believe you are exactly the one for whom Jesus came and died.

If you are feeling conviction from the Holy Spirit, you will know what to do. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Ask for God's forgiveness. Make things right with others to the degree it is within your power to do so.

And then get on with the mission God has given you to do!

3. Manipulation and Control.

We need guidance, encouragement, teaching, protection and sometimes even correction. We need appropriate authority in business, society, government, the church and even in the home in order to maintain peace and allow human beings to thrive. Our well-being is often affected by how well those in authority fulfill their responsibilities.

But Satan has a sinister way of twisting God's concept of authority and turning it into manipulation and control. In the home, this has resulted in domestic violence and the subjection of (usually) women and children to the whims and desires of (usually) men. In the church this has resulted in toxic religion, cults, twisted applications of church discipline and attempts at "elder" control of minute aspects of people's lives.

When another human being attempts to control or manipulate you for their own purposes, you can be sure it is Satan's work and not God's. Jesus came as a servant, and those who rightly exercise His authority will do the same. "He who is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matt. 23:11).

Jesus never delegated to any human being the right to play junior Holy Spirit in anyone else's life. If someone is trying to play that role in your life, be very suspicious. Realize that Jesus alone is your Lord; all others must take a lower place.

When You're Under Attack

Learn to be wary of confusion, condemnation, manipulation and control. Use your feelings as a barometer; sometimes they may alert you to an attack from the enemy.

If you become aware of these feelings, stop. Survey your mind and heart for these characteristics of the enemy.

And then use your precious emotional energy to enter God's presence. Get calm and listen for His voice. He will meet you there.

Your Turn: Have you been aware of confusion, condemnation or manipulation and control in your life? Can you see that as the enemy at work? How does that help you get your fight back? Leave a comment below. {eo}

Dr. Carol Peters-Tanksley is both a board-certified OB-Gyn physician and an ordained Doctor of Ministry. As an author and speaker, she loves helping people discover the Fully Alive kind of life Jesus came to bring us. Visit her website at .

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