

How You Can Recognize Spiritual Attack and Defend Yourself

There are occasional bumps in the road of life, but how do we know the difference between a challenging day, a difficult season or an actual spiritual attack? How do we open our spiritual eyes to see what is happening and overcome it?

Have you experienced times when you felt like everything that could go wrong was going wrong? You find yourself overwhelmed and bombarded on all fronts. In the midst of multiple crisis situations your mind seems heavy, your body tired and your spirit dull. You want to pray, and you try to pray, but it seems as though your mouth is filled with chalk and the words fall on hard ground to no avail.

There are fires burning all around you, but you're not sure which one to put out first. It seems hard to believe that so many things could be going wrong at the same time. Part of you wants to ignore what you're facing, part of you wants to fight like a mad warrior, and part of you feels as if you are drowning in a sea of despair. All these descriptions are signs of a spiritual attack. As believers we often live between the tension of two kingdoms:

1. The kingdom of light – God's kingdom is filled with purpose and destiny for our lives. God, our loving Father, has created such good plans for us! As we walk with Him, the reality of our position in His kingdom becomes clear, as described in Philippians 3:20: "But our citizenship is in heaven, from where also we await for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." We grow wiser concerning spiritual attacks and learn to identify clear victory strategies.

2. The kingdom of darkness – The devil, who leads this world,

is a dethroned being who really has no authority in our lives. He displays an unusual determination to corrupt and destroy humanity. He is persistent and relentless, continually bombarding the lives of people. This fallen angel named Satan (Luke 10:18) continues to attack, lie and invade with the intent of crushing God's purposes for our lives.

The reality is that there is an invisible realm all around us. We may live and move in the natural realm, but we all are citizens of the spiritual realm as well. One of the great deceptions the devil uses is convincing people he does not exist. It is an effective weapon because a spiritual attack must be recognized before it can be conquered. Many other individuals are walking around blinded by the lies of the enemy. He has silenced their discernment, blocked their weaponry and moved in under the cover of darkness.

We Cannot Ignore Our Enemy

But, as believers, we are given discernment to know his purposes and schemes (2 Cor. 2:11). It's time for us to open our eyes, discover the real invader and put him on the run! We cannot adopt the strategy of the ostrich and bury our heads in the sand, somehow hoping that if we just pretend nothing is going on, the attack will cease. This is the warfare plan many misguided Christians embrace. They follow the lead of the ostrich and refuse to acknowledge the existence and work of the devil.

Every time I write, preach or share any type of message about spiritual warfare, critics raise their voices. "Why are you acknowledging the enemy?" they'll ask. "Why talk about him? Why focus on him?" Other things they say are less kind. They seem to feel as though it is a sin to expound on the strategies of the enemy.

It is a really ridiculous argument to me. Imagine a general with the greatest army and all the military advantages on his

side choosing to ignore his enemy because his opponent's weapons and military are inferior. The general decides he will pretend his enemy does not exist. He will hope and pray that nothing happens and will simply try to think positively.

I know what you are thinking: "That is ridiculous!" I agree with you, but that is the approach so many in the church advocate. They want to ignore the devil, pretending he is not there.

This is not a strategy for victory! Jesus did not ignore the works of hell. In fact, He plundered hell and terrorized the devil everywhere He went. There was not a day in Jesus's earthly ministry that He was not harassing the devil. Luke describes one such clash:

"He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. When the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke, and the crowd marveled. But some of them said, 'He casts out demons through Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.' Others, testing Him, asked Him for a sign from heaven.

"But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate. And a house divided against itself falls. If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons through Beelzebub. Now if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, no doubt the kingdom of God has come upon you'" (Luke 11:14–20).

Jesus's ministry brought terror to the courts of hell. When He showed up, the enemy was not only exposed but also kicked out. Jesus cast the devil out of the mute man in Luke 11, and the man's tongue was loosed to speak and to glorify God. Immediately accusations and persecution arose against Jesus. This is the same thing we see manifesting all around us today.

When a minister deals with the powers of hell, people become nervous, afraid and even offended. These reactions are a manifestation of the kingdom of darkness that are intended to keep people imprisoned. Jesus revealed that breaking the power of the enemy and manifesting the kingdom of God is a revelation of "the finger of God." He showed that part of His divine authority and nature is to displace the works of hell.

Some religious people will claim that acknowledging the existence of spiritual warfare empowers the enemy. He didn't seem much empowered in the verses of Luke 11! I know there are those in the church who put too much attention on the power of the enemy, and I believe you can get out of balance by constantly focusing on evil spirits.

The truth is this: There is a real devil who desires to kill, steal and destroy. He has literal plans to execute against the children of God. If we do not properly understand his mode of operation, he will launch successful attacks against us. {eoa}

*The preceding is excerpted from Overcoming Spiritual Attack by **Ryan LeStrange**, published by Charisma House, 2016. Copyright © 2016 by Ryan LeStrange.*

Ryan LeStrange started in ministry after training and serving under his spiritual father, Dr. Norvel Hayes. Ryan and his wife, Joy, lead Impact International Ministries based in Bristol, Virginia, which consists of several local churches and revival ministries. Through Ryan LeStrange Ministries, he travels the globe preaching, igniting revival and moving in the power of God. Ryan can be seen weekly on his television program, Power 4 Today, airing around the world on GodTV. He is the founder and apostle of Impact International Apostolic Fellowship, networking and fathering ministers around the world. Ryan has written several books releasing an apostolic and prophetic perspective to the body of Christ.