

Keys to Defeating the Devil

During the first several years after I became a charismatic Christian, I listened to a lot of teaching on spiritual warfare. I tried to learn all I could to defeat the devil because it was obvious he was giving me a lot of trouble. I wanted the upper hand for a change.

It seemed I gained no victory from applying all the methods I had learned. Then the Lord graciously shared some truths that have become a blessing in my life. He showed me that spiritual warfare “methods” are good—but they are only carriers, or containers, for His real power.

I was busy rebuking, resisting, casting out and off, binding and loosing, fasting and praying—and anything else anyone told me to do. The results were minimal, and I was worn out. I was getting to the point of “spiritual burnout.” This occurs when a Christian continues to do things that do not produce positive results.

God opened up a whole new way of looking at spiritual warfare when He challenged me to observe how Jesus dealt with the devil. As I studied His ways, I noticed that Jesus did not do the things I had been doing. For example, I learned that remaining obedient is spiritual warfare.

We often quote only a portion of James 4:7. I usually hear it quoted like this: “Resist the devil and he will flee.” However, I knew from experience that couldn’t be the whole story because, I was busy resisting, but he was not fleeing. Then I saw the whole Scripture: “So be subject to God. Resist the devil [stand firm against him], and he will flee from you” (*The Amplified Bible*).

The first part about submitting to God is equally as important as the second part about resisting the devil. I realized that I was not as concerned about *submitting* as I was about

resisting. It was a relief to find that my obedience would cause the devil to flee from me.

As we walk in obedience, angels assist us in our warfare. Angel assistance will surely make the task much easier. Angels do not just work on my behalf because I am alive, nor do they work on my behalf just because I believe Jesus is my Savior. They hearken to the Word of God.

As we speak God's Word and walk in obedience and service to God and man, the angels move on our behalf and protect us from principalities and powers. This does not mean that we can never make a mistake or be harmed. It does mean that we must be serious about our lifestyle of obedience.

The Holy Spirit also revealed that the love walk brings spiritual warfare. The devil cannot handle a lover! He could not control Jesus because He walked in obedience and love. Jesus was always loving people and being good to them. The Word of God instructs us to "keep ourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21).

This may have a deeper meaning than just staying in love. It may be saying you will keep yourself from much harm as you remain in love. The Scriptures tell us that in the last days "the love of the great body of people [the church] will grow cold" (Matt. 24:12). This verse tells us that "cold love" will be one of the signs of the last days. Yet the apostle Peter admonishes us: "Above all things have intense and unfailing love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins [forgives and disregards the offenses of others]" (1 Peter 4:8).

The devil brings offense, disharmony and strife among people, but the antidote for the whole poisonous problem is love! We can rebuke all the devils in the world—literally scream at them until we have no voice left—but they will not flee from the person who cares nothing for obedience or the love walk.

Satan knows that Christians who “talk the talk” but do not “walk the walk” are powerless against him. His end-time warfare strategy is to build a stronghold of cold love. In this way he can keep the church of Jesus Christ powerless, but by remaining in love we can do spiritual warfare and defeat his tactics.

If you’re tired of allowing the enemy to wreak havoc in your life, as I was, set him running today. Begin to hit him with the one-two punch of spiritual warfare: obey God (while resisting the devil) and walk in love!

*Adapted from **Joyce Meyer’s** book Life Without Strife, copyright 2000. Published by Charisma House. This book will teach you how to overcome strife and live the peaceful life God wants you to live.*