

The Hidden Danger of Toxic Apathy in Spiritual Warfare

It's nearly impossible to walk away from the biblical narrative unfazed by the captivating and convicting descriptions of the spiritual battles that rage on its illustrious pages. The pull described in Scripture that tugs at the hearts and minds of human beings and, in turn, transforms and oppresses nations and cultures, simply cannot be ignored.

Many will try to look away from these powerful currents, but we can see the evidence of their pervasiveness in our own natural intrigue—an innate interest that drives millions to flock to Hollywood horror flicks and to pay close attention when stories of unrestrained evil burst into the mainstream.

The Bible tells us these demonic evils are real, rather than mere fiction. Christians might disagree over the nature of evil, the ways in which it manifests and the tools needed to combat it, but the biblical narrative makes it clear that dismissing the existence of Satan and associated wickedness simply isn't a choice for the biblically literate believer.

After researching the multitude of claims, Scriptures and opinions about the demonic realm, I can't help but conclude that the biggest danger pertaining to spiritual warfare and its role in our lives is rooted in our own toxic apathy.

At the core of the matter, there's rabid material aloofness that tricks so many critics into denying the existence of good, evil and everything in between.

This particular brand of indifference or even hostility toward truth – one that hyperfocuses on the temporal—tends to conceal diabolical forces, thus shielding their impact on our everyday lives and dismissing any and all claims of spiritual warfare

as happenstance. Some in this camp might question why we don't see these demonic manifestations more vividly and routinely, which is an appropriate question to pose.

That said, there are some sufficient answers. If indeed it's true that there is an enemy who seeks to kill and destroy, why would that foe seek sunlight and attention? Wouldn't he prefer to continue lurking in the shadows, covertly wreaking havoc? Hiding, it seems, would be the more effective tactic, and many in the faith space agree.

"It's a great tactic of the enemy to stay in the darkness," Grace Driscoll told *The Pure Flix* podcast. "And if we bring him out into the light, it exposes a lot of his tactics."

An obsession with the material incubates too many people from wanting to engage in the steps necessary to protect themselves and others. But the apathy or hostility of secularists isn't the only problem we face, as apathy within Christian circles also runs rampant.

Too many Christians, pastors and churches have become complacent when it comes to discussing the full scope of the gospel, specifically the impact of spiritual warfare. God doesn't call us to have all of the answers, but to ignore a ministry that was clearly one of the most substantial parts of Jesus' earthly walk seems strange and perplexing.

In addition to potentially causing us to miss some essential parts of the biblical narrative, ignoring the role and power of evil in our world also has other pitfalls, especially when it comes to processing God's love. Having proper "categories" for evil and good is essential to crafting human understanding.

In addition to obsessive secularism and biblical lethargy, intellectual apathy on the part of professed Christians can also be quite problematic. When we make definitive claims that everything in existence has demonic roots and that nothing

stems from natural or physical causes, it can lead to skepticism and even worse, physical and spiritual malfeasance.

Finding the balance between mental and physical afflictions is necessary. From faith leaders to mental health providers, the consensus seems clear: a proper investigation of a person's afflictions is essential before concluding that something demonic is at the root.

We're clearly dealing with three forms of apathy that must be confronted: Secularists' failure to embrace truth, Christians' dereliction of spiritual duty to confront truth and believers' obsessive, hyperspiritual approach that alienates and expels intellect. In the end, it's about finding balance as we approach the Scriptures. If you read *Playing with Fire* with intense skepticism and perhaps even the occasional eye roll, I'd challenge you to think more deeply.

Regardless of where you stand, recognizing the truths in Ephesians 6 is key. The Lord is powerful, and with the "full armor of God" we are able to take our "stand against the devil's schemes." Finally, truth calls us to Christ, and faith in Christ yields healing. The spiritual warfare discussion is about freedom, with Christ's death on the cross and his resurrection serving as the most transformational, curative measure in human history.

One of the common threads in all our discussions in *Playing with Fire* is that the power of Jesus' name is what yields true liberty—a reality that should come as no surprise when we study Christ's own words. Speaking to the Jews who believed in him, Jesus had a pertinent message:

"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31-32, NIV). And he continued, "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (v. 36).

No matter where we stand on the spiritual warfare scale, one

thing is universally true: we all need the Savior, as it is His power that helps us extinguish the flames of evil.

Believing in deliverance doesn't offer us salvation, but Scripture tells us that embracing Jesus and having a personal relationship with Him can help heal our hearts and souls and can guarantee we spend eternity with Christ. And that's what truly matters.

Faith is a beautiful process—one that can protect us against spiritual chaos. {eoa}

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