

A Bible Study on Dealing with the Enemy

L3: What Everyone Needs to know to Deal with the Enemy

God has given us in his Book sufficient knowledge regarding the devil to help us, both as to our attitude toward the enemy and as to the weapons that we are to use in conflict with him. But biblical students as a rule are indifferent to the subject. It is not popular nor agreeable; yet God holds us responsible for this ignorance of what he has revealed to us regarding Satan... Satan thrives on this ignorance...The light of truth is his undoing; expose the foe by the light of truth. Challenge him by the victory of the Cross and he is defeated. He is a broken power.

--Charles Usher

As we prepare to conclude our study on dealing with the enemy, here are the questions that each of us should know about as we go about to successfully defend and offend our enemy!

Can Satan, or evil spirits, read your thoughts?

This question comes up frequently. The answer is **no**. If a Christian is free from internal demonization, the enemy cannot read his or her thoughts from the inside out. "Minds set on what the Spirit desires" (Romans 8:5) are a sanctuary impenetrable by unholy spirits.

By reading facial expressions, voice intonation, and behavioral nuances, they can often predict what we are going to do. But this does not mean they have access to our innermost thoughts. However, within the demonized believer, spirits have more ready access to thoughts.

Evil beings may indeed project thoughts into the mind, moods into the emotions, and impulses into the will from their external vantage point. This is the stuff of which most spiritual warfare is made. But the battle must be characterized primarily as from the outside in, rather than the inside out.

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How can I tell the difference between the voice of the Holy Spirit and evil spirits?

God will never speak anything that is contrary to his revealed Word or character. The Holy Spirit is gentle, clear, and consistent in his leading. He leads by an inward prompting that has a "ring of rightness" to it. Often other persons or circumstances will confirm his voice. If we are truly submitted to him, we will be open to the scrutiny and correction of others. The voice of God will always result in redemptive purpose (Ex. 2:24, 25; 3:1-8; Luke 19:10). Fruit will flow from the promptings of the Father.

The devil, on the other hand, is sly (Gen. 2:16, 17; now consider Gen. 3:1-5), often bringing doubts and questions concerning the reliability of God's character. An evil spirit compels a certain thought or behavior, and leaves us in a state of confusion and heaviness (1Cor. 14:33).

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How can I discern between a human impulse and demonic temptation?

James describes carnality as "earthly, unspiritual, of the devil" (James 3:13-18). This covers the bases. In a sense, such struggles do overlap with the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is hard, and often pointless, to try to nail down the exact source. Our response should be the same: be ready to repent of sin, reject false values of the world, and resist Satan as enticer. Generally, it is wise to assume our struggle to be of the flesh, that which we can do something about (Gal. 5:16-21, then contrast v. 22). Here is a practical approach to answer the question: confess it as sin, reckon yourself dead to it, and receive the Lord's forgiveness. Peace and increased control of the Holy Spirit should follow, even if you repeat the process. If there is no peace or victory through treating this as carnality, you would be wise to pray with a discerning Christian to check for oppression.

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What are the typical ways in which people come to be oppressed?

Spiritual oppression is not a haphazard occurrence. There are principles that govern the warfare. Research with oppressed individuals has identified four major sources of oppression:

1. Through the personal, persistent practice of moral compromise;
2. Through the sins of others in one's family history that have opened doors to evil spirits which then try to influence and invade "down line" generations;
3. Through the victimizing sins of others, e.g., rape, incest, violent acts, occultic ritual;
4. Through ministry activity that draws attention from the enemy.

Here, our responsibility is to follow God's pattern of repentance, forgiveness and living a holy life through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit

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In resistance, must my prayers be audible, or can I pray silently?

Based on the models of Jesus and Paul, audible rebuke of the enemy seems to be most effective. Remember, the "sword of the Spirit" is the rhema (Greek, for WORD), the spoken word.

What problems are often incorrectly thought to be demonic?

1. *Physical* - hormonal imbalances, allergies, epilepsy, manic depression (see a doctor).
2. *Emotional* - low self esteem, severe emotional damage, or deprivation (encourage yourself in the Lord).
3. *Psychological* - phobias, obsessive compulsive disorders, and character disorders (seek Godly counseling).
4. *Behavioral* - compulsive disorders, and addictions (get behavioral addiction support).

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How can you distinguish between a psychiatric disorder and demonization?

1. Seek to interact with a person over certain truths concerning Jesus Christ or the Word of God.
2. The eye test: with eyes open, pray with the person and ask any demons to identify themselves.

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Recent books on spiritual warfare suggest that prayer enables angels to accomplish God's will, is this notion biblical?

Scripture is clear that angels are commissioned by God as agents for the outworking of his will: to bring messages, to administer judgment and to minister grace and protection to the redeemed. II Kings 6; Ps 34:6,7; Dan. 10:13-20.

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How can I discern the difference between a normal dream and a demonic disturbance?

Dreams are prompted by a combination of conscious reality with unconscious fears and desires. You can suspect demonic activity when one or more of the following factors seem true:

1. You awaken in a state of extreme terror or heaviness that does not clear up right away.
2. A distinct evil presence is perceived in the waking state following the dream.
3. You feel separated from God's peace - confused and fearful.
4. There are distinct satanic symbols, faces, or verbal threats.
5. The negative symptoms do not clear up when you or your spouse or a friend prays.

What can I do if I seem to be abnormally harassed by someone at work?

1. Don't assume too quickly that evil spirits are involved.
2. Do nothing to knowingly provoke the person to greater dislike.
3. PRAY. Seek and receive regularly the Lord's shielding, and actively speak blessings back to the person in prayer and also with direct kindness (Mt. 5:11, 44; Luke 6:28).
4. Be truly willing to endure hardship and the suffering of injustice; your Christian character is being assaulted by evil and tested by God.
5. Be spiritually assertive, establish your turf with a spiritual authority that is gentle but firm.
6. As clearly led, walk through open doors to dialogue with this person about spiritual things, then wait and watch God Work.

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What is the right response to a teenager who is into such things as heavy metal music occult or sensual posters, rebellious attitudes, and questionable friends?

Be patient and persevering in your prayer, asking especially on a regular basis for the protection of your child. Establish values and standards at home and speak matter-of-factly about the dangers of demonic influence. Stand solidly on the assurances of Psalm 102:28 and 103:17, 18 regarding the children of the righteous. Ask God to honor your faith and work according to His word.

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Is there any danger in watching television or movies with occultic or sensual content?

The real danger here is that movies and television can conduct a visual and verbal assault on our senses that stirs carnality, misdirect the mind, and potentially opens doors of influence. Let Psalm 101:3 be your guide: " *I will set before my eyes no worthless things.*" Sin is not simply wrong behavior. It has roots in the mind (see James 1:14,15: Col. 3:2).

What are the most important aspects of achieving victory while dealing with the enemy in spiritual warfare?

1. First, is recognizing the possibility of warfare.
2. Second, we must learn to call on God more quickly in prayer to ask for light on our circumstance and for deliverance if necessary.
3. Third, the key to immediate victory is to use the weapons of the truth (Eph. 6:13-18), the name and blood of Jesus, prayer and praise in an active, authoritative manner.
4. Fourth, a general perspective: learn better how the Holy Spirit guides you. He is the source of divine power within you and will enlighten you about how to respond in any situation.

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We Have The Victory!!!