

Warfare in Relationships (Part 2)

Last week we began to explore the concept of spiritual warfare in the context of relationships. We highlighted the fact that it is more to do with obedience than pseudo spiritual formulae. We stated that you cannot separate deliverance from discipleship. We went on to discuss the various strategies the enemy uses against us. It is important to note that the Devil has power (*Dunamis*) but has no real authority (*Exousia*). His authority is limited to what we allow him to do in our lives because of the legal right we give him through our lifestyle. This is why the Bible instructs us not to give the Devil a foothold. The enemy has been disarmed through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He uses various strategies and trickery to affect the lives of believers. We mentioned in Part 1 that he will try to intimidate us; he thrives on our ignorance; he attempts to influence us to violate universal laws and he uses the element of surprise. This week we will continue to look at these strategies and how to overcome them.

5. He attempts to wear down the saints

How many of you know that a lot of the things that we do not do for God, is because we are tired. We can try and spiritualise these things but often it is because we are fatigued. Some of you are so eager to do great things for God and the devil knows that he cannot stop you, so guess what, he will try to get you distracted and make sure that you get exhausted. So he will make you do a lot of things in the flesh and your whole life becomes stressful until you are literally worn out and before you know it you drop out of church. This reminds me of a wife sharing how she was so exhausted by her routine and therefore not available for her husband. Be careful of the combo of fatigue and cynicism; it can become burnout.

Daniel 7:25

He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law.

This is the fourth beast and some translations say “oppress” the saints.

This is a strategy sometimes used in boxing. Let your opponent punch you until he gets tired.

Matthew 11:30 (NIV) *For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*

Matthew 11:30 (NLT) *For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.*

The devil wants to weigh you down but God wants you to operate in grace, according to the grace that He has given you. Do not do things that He has not called you to. When you are flowing under the anointing you are energised by it. **What are you doing today that is out of guilt or because you just want to perform for people? What is your grace zone? What is your area of strength?** Your area of grace is not just what you are good at, it is what you are good at but you are also

energised by it when you do it. **Are you also putting weights on people in your family that God has not put?**

We put weights on ourselves through debilitating rules. Sometimes we are worn out because of these debilitating rules we have created for ourselves. Other times we are simply people pleasers. We feel we have to perform to be accepted. The Bible says do everything from love (1 Cor 16:14)...not from the need to be accepted. The Bible says love is not self-seeking. This is the problem with the root of rejection.

1 Corinthians 15:10 *But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.*

One of the ways the enemy wears you down is through legalism.

- Legalism is putting rules above God and above human needs. (Luke 13: 10-17).
- Legalism is accepting or rejecting people on the basis of rules and regulations rather than faith and love.
- Legalism is making laws, which God does not make.
- The Pharisees were experts in legalism. (Matthew 12:1-8 and Matthew 12: 9-14).
- Legalism is about external behaviour rather than heart relationship.
- Legalistic behaviour is a dead work because it is a religious observance which does not come out of faith and love.

Sometimes we are worn out because we have not distinguished between CTM (Conventional Time Management) and ITM (Inner Time Management).

Pillars of engagement are dedication, vigour and absorption. The more engaged you are the better your performance at work. The enemy does not mind Christians going to church as long as they are not engaged.

6. He practices divide and conquer

The spirit of division is a big thing. **What thoughts have you believed about someone that may be causing division?** It is important that you guard the anointing in your life. God wants to use you. However, if you have bitterness in your heart, you limit and short circuit the anointing in your life.

Matthew 12:25-26 *Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?"*

One thing the kingdom of darkness has done well is that it is united. If you want your family to be a powerful family, then be in agreement as husband and wife. One of the most powerful sources of

power in a marriage is when a husband and wife are in agreement. The enemy's strategy is to bring division in marriage in many different ways. We often take things people say out of context and then feel hurt rather we should practise good hermeneutics like we do in Bible interpretation – see the passage in context)

Matthew 18:19 *Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”*

When you are isolated, you become a target for the enemy. It is important to understand that there is power in agreement. The figurative use of the word “agree” in Matthew 18:19 is *sumphoneo*, from which comes the word symphony, meaning a harmonious blending. Share your struggles with your spouse or with those close to you. Do not live in isolation. Some of you need to talk to someone. Eg Bob Lee Swagger’s wife in the series *Shooter* had to learn this. For many it is just *Ignore and Override*.

1 John 1:7 *When we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.*

Many people believe that if they are perfect they will not be rejected so they try to project perfection.

7. He is a strategic liar

The devil is a strategic liar but the problem with a lot of Christians is that they do not know how to differentiate between the voice of the devil and their own voice which comes from their carnal self and the voice of the Holy Spirit. When you get close to God it becomes very easy to recognise His voice. The only power that the devil has is the power that you give him. Do not be deceived by the wiles of the enemy, the craft of his deceit.

John 8:44 *You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

The word “father” also speaks of a nourisher. The devil nourishes lies, if you start to consider something that is not true about yourself or about God or about others or the world, he nourishes it. The word “father” also speaks of source, it speaks of sustainer, the devil sustains lies. The one thing that gives power to demonic strongholds in our minds is guardian lies. I believe that God wants us to rejoice in the truth, the Bible says rejoice in the truth, love what is good and hate what is evil, Many Christians have become friends with fear. Many Christians have become friends with lies. How often do you sit back and just start to imagine things that are actually lies? It is not sin that the thought comes into your mind, it is sin that the thought alights. The strongholds that develop in our

minds are often because you allow yourself to consider the enemy's lies and allow them to nest and hatch in your mind.

He lies through false accusation

He tempts us to believe lies about ourselves, others, God and the world

Some research was done by McKinsey on successful women in the work environment. They concluded that there were five common denominators amongst them and one of them was that they **positively framed** the world around them. They were not pessimists. Ask yourself, "am I living in hope?" Am I dreaming? Am I believing? Am I in faith? Some of you hide from love because of the lies you have believed. If you cannot trust people, you will never get to a place where you are vulnerable. You can only be effective to the degree that you make yourself vulnerable. You have to come to a place where you overcome your mis-beliefs and replace them with counter-arguments. You begin to dismantle strongholds in your life by the word of God, the word of God is your counter argument. Everyone who is called by God has some misbeliefs, Gideon, "...but I am the least in my father's house", Jeremiah, "Lord I am but a youth". Your emotions influence your behaviour, but your emotions are primarily triggered by the guardian lies you have believed. Negative self-talk or self-criticism and tension make an already anxiety provoking situation much more difficult. In fact, we know that negative thinking creates anxiety, and interferes with attention and concentration. According to recent research, "we feel the way we think". Therefore, if you have negative beliefs about yourself or others you will not have positive feelings about yourself, other people, or most social interactions.

- **Guardian lies give power to strongholds in your mind.**
- **Inner villagers affect your interpretation of situations and result in over reactions and hurt.**
- **We are not hurt by our experiences but by the story we tell ourselves of those experiences.**
- **People don't do things to you, they do things for themselves.**

8. He finds your weakness and exploits it

Sun Tzu in the book Art of War explains how **an army's opportunities come from the openings in the environment caused by the relative weakness of the enemy in a given area**. Trace the time that you have fallen into sin, more often than not, it is because of the strategy the enemy has used against you. The devil also remembers your history, he remembers the last time you fell, he remembers the last time you fell because of bitterness and so he just uses the same strategy but a different situation. What are your weaknesses; disorganisation, poor memory, self-control etc

2 Timothy 2:22 *Flee also youthful lusts, but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*

Romans 12:9 *Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil, cling to what is good.*

The more you embrace Jesus the more you abhor and hate sin. The more you embrace the Kingdom of God the more you begin to abhor evil. What is God calling you to pursue in this season? It is difficult to rebuke a demon you have chosen to partner with or patronise. Resisting the devil means to oppose. It is not just a verbal statement but as James 4:7 says: *“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you”*. **Warfare is a lifestyle not an activity.**

What are your ticking time bombs?

9. He tempts you to be misaligned with authority

Throughout life you are always walking in a place where you are either in authority or under authority. There are some people who hold positions of authority in their workplaces, then, when they come to church and are told to park in a specific place by a security guard, they get offended. When I am in my house, I am in authority as the head of my household. However, the moment I take my kids to school I am under the authority of the governing body of the school. A lot of people do not know how to switch gears from being in authority to being under authority. Angels understand authority, demons also understand authority. The kingdom of darkness is very organised, even though it is for the wrong reasons. Authority comes from God and there are different dimensions of authority. There is authority in the church and there is authority of civil government. Authority is not a bad thing, but abuse of authority is what is negative.

The word submission is not in negative word, it is a word associated with the military. The word “submit” is the Greek word *hupotasso* and is primarily a military term, which means to rank under (*hupo*, under, *tasso*, to arrange). **The enemy wants you to trespass in the spirit.**

Ephesians 5:21 Honor Christ by submitting to each other

*1 Cor 11:10-11 10 It is for this reason that a woman ought to have authority over her own[a] head, **because of the angels.** 11 Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.*