



SPIRITUAL WARFARE : fighting evil when it is being most direct

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These choices are yours, not the devil's :

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WHAT IS SPIRITUAL WARFARE?

'**Spiritual warfare**' is the struggle to have life in this material world reflect as much as possible God's loving governance. It is a 'war' because there are forces working vigorously to thwart God's work. God is in charge, but there is an enemy that is in full-scale revolt, and it has powerful influence all around. As with the unseen God, the forces behind the revolt are unseen, non-physical, and supernatural. They lust after power in the world of visible, material beings. Just because the battle is unseen doesn't mean it isn't going on. It is. In every nook and cranny of our earthly existence. In deciding to follow Christ, the believer accepts the rulership of Christ in his/her life (that's what's meant when Jesus is called 'Lord' --

His authority and rule). This New You yields the throne of the self to Jesus, but the Old You doesn't like it one bit.

The struggle against the Devil and all his empty promises is at its heart a 'second Person' matter, a work of Christ Himself. The Holy Spirit leads us in our part of the struggle.

The Scriptures speak of spiritual warfare in several places, but most directly by Paul in Ephesians 6:10-20, where he speaks of the full armor of God. Most pointed is verse 12 : **"For we struggle not against flesh and blood, but against the kingdoms, against the powers, against the world leaders of this darkness, against spiritual wickedness in the high places"**.

The Devil has already lost. But the Devil is trying to take as many with him as he can, apparently just to hurt God. And however much the Devil succeeds in doing this, God hurts -- like a parent does over losing a child. This sort of spite is very much in keeping with the Devil's character. Satan is a leech; he is so lacking in life that the only life he has left is what he can suck out of the living.

WAR TALK

Many people, including many Christians, do not like the use of the word 'warfare' here. I'll be honest: I myself do not like the imagery. War's a horrible thing, and we follow the Prince of Peace. But Scriptural imagery uses warfare language, and thus it would be very wrong to reject it. Just as important, those who are going through the worst of the struggle sooner or later find themselves leaning on war-like terms. They're going through more than a mere 'struggle' -- they're going through a kind of hell. War imagery captures this with a precision and emotional connection no other imagery has yet come close to. Everyone knows what the imagery means, so when it's used, the point is quickly understood by believer and non-believer alike. And war language, while it may make too much of any one 'battle', is the only language which successfully catches the epic proportion of what is going on in the supernatural realm. I would hope for a substitute, but 'war talk', judiciously and wisely used, will simply have to do for now.

That said, Christ's followers are called on to use a very different set of weapons: we are to be instruments of peace. Paul refers to the shoes of the gospel of **peace**; the belt of **truth**; and the sword of **the Spirit** -- the word of God (Ephesians 6:10-18). These are hardly A-bombs or bullets or bayonets. Such weapons are not only very destructive to the evils of the Devil's work, but are also the blocks upon which a lasting shalom is built. In ancient Judah, King Jehoshaphat took 'weapons of peace' literally (2 Chronicles 20:1-30): he sent out praise singers in front of the soldiers, causing such disarray that the enemy started slaughtering each other. Then as now, the lesson is that only God gives the victory over evil.

WHAT IF I CAN'T LOVE ENOUGH?

The most important truth about spiritual warfare is that it is first and foremost a work of love. Not love for the struggle, or the love of "saving souls" or of victory. It's a work of love for God's Kingdom, and love for the people Jesus was crucified over -- which is each and every one. Some people have an easier time with loving. Their emotional makeup and life circumstances make it easier for them to make their love effective. It's much easier to love if you've been loved. Many people have a much harder time of loving. They're burdened with a heavy load of taunting, fear, oppression, or mental disease. Or worse, they haven't experienced love from anyone and so have no idea what it really is or what it does or how to give it.

The hard truth, though, is that *noone* has enough love on their own to do spiritual warfare. In Matthew

7:7, Jesus says to ask and it will be given. So ask God to enable you to love with God's love. The Spirit's more than happy to give you this. But like everything else God gives, it's made to be real. It will take stubborn, regular prayer, taking risks, and maybe some hard lessons and changes in outlook, for the love to start flowing out of you. If the love isn't there, it's like going into battle unarmed and unprepared, straight into the line of fire.

SPIRITUAL WELFARE

One can only start 'spiritual warfare' from the point of view of 'spiritual welfare'. In both senses of the word 'welfare'.

- 'Welfare' in terms of one's spiritual good. Satan looks for weakness, and exploits places in our life where we allow ourselves to be a sham. The art of turning oneself over to God and partaking in God's friendship is at the heart of all the Christian forms of spiritual discipline. When one does that, there's much less room for Satan's torments. We also can fight Satan by praying for the 'spiritual welfare' of others (a form of 'intercessory prayer', which itself flows from love).
- 'Welfare' also in the sense of the US social services program. For we all are spiritually-impooverished vagabonds with no way to support ourselves. Only God can win the spiritual struggles. If we depend on our own resources, we get tangled in the web and eaten by the Spider. There is no place for personal pride in spiritual warfare. We share in **God's** victory -- the empty tomb -- but only as far as we share in God's **loss** -- the cross. The cross is a moment of being emptied into self-surrender. That is where 'spiritual warfare' starts.

Inner Change and Spiritual Warfare

- > I am doing a presentation on the theme 'Lord, change me' - with the sub-themes
- > Changed through earthly power, demonic power, godly power

The first key here is that **the Lord** changed you from what you were, and is still changing you. As a baptized Christian believer, you have the Holy Spirit living inside you, teaching you how to live as a follower of Christ. The Spirit brings you Christ Himself, that you may have His righteousness. And the Spirit works through other followers of Christ, the people around you, building each other up strong and keeping each other going in the right direction. That's godly power. Tell them about what God has done for *you* in these ways.

Earthly power changes us, too. Think of the people around you who do not believe. What they do matters to you, affects you, shapes you. Their kindnesses and cruelties set the tone for much of what you do. What happens to your nation, and how it acts as a nation -- you're part of it, and you have to live with the fruit it bears. This is not right or wrong by itself -- it is just true. The world and local economies are earthly power -- it can bless with good things, like jobs, goods, and being able to go from place to place. Earthly power is a mixed bag. God can use it. The Devil can use it. But most of all, **people** use it and are used by it.

Demonic power changes us, too. Not that the Devil has any real power - Christ broke his power. The Devil has not much more than what we give him. When we give him something of ourselves, we sin. We decide we'll go for fame, power, wealth, or lust. We break our promises of marriage, friendship, business, faith, village, law, or school. We break other people by way of gossip and maneuver to take their social place, to bring them down. All of us are that way sometimes. How have you been that way? And what led you to do otherwise, and follow God rather than these temptations? Share something of that. The more we give ground to the temptation, the stronger the pull of Satan on our soul.

Please remember to pray several times each day until you present, and trust that the Spirit will use you.

Try to draw on your own experiences and of those you're talking to. And also read Paul's letter to the Romans.

Be bold; God's with you whenever you seek Him.



Doing Spiritual Warfare in the everyday world in ordinary things

TACTICS

It's not only good faith, but often a good tactic to take action in the opposite way from evil. Where there's anger, act to bring calm, and things may calm down. Where there is greed, start giving - it might become infectious. Where large egos rule, be a servant of all, and the contrast will speak for you. Where there is backbiting and gossip, say things to build people up, and it may suck the poison out. Where there is disunity, seek a way to bring people together, and you may find surprising allies. Do these things deliberately, in a way that exposes the evil for what it is. You may not be safely able to name the evil, but your actions and attitudes can reveal the truth when words can't.

WHY IT'S HARDER FOR THE NEWBIES

It is often reported by people with fresh spiritual experiences that afterwards, it seems like everything in their life is set up to oppose their new view. It's as if they're being subjected to test after test. Why is that? Let's look at some of the reasons:

1. The old life was built around the Old You: old habits, old friends, old pleasures, old behaviors. The New You gets dropped straight into this, and it feels like diving into a cold pool.
2. Part of being 'new' is that you become aware of evils that weren't noticed before. They were always there, but they used to be treated as simply being part of life. Now, the new believer has a new and greater goal, and the boulders that were climbed as par for the course are now seen for what they were all along.
3. The 'newbies' have yet to learn how to discern. It takes a lifetime to get right (maybe that's one reason God gave us a lifetime in which to do it?)
4. It takes time to learn how to see things in their right context. There may be good, godly ways and reasons to do what one used to do sinfully. Often, as the newborn faith develops, God gives back much of what had to be spurned at the beginning. One of the most common experiences of the Jesus Movement of the 1960s and 1970s was that the new convert would throw away all their old 'secular' rock and roll records, only to find out years later that they were not such a danger after all, and that a few of those old records even expressed a well-tested faith or spoke a truth we needed to hear. God gave them back the gift of enjoying the music, but had to take it away at first so that their inner priorities could be changed and their New You could take shape.
5. Satan really **does** attack early and often. He does not like losing anyone. It's easier for Satan to pull back those who are not yet solid in the faith.

There's no use in saying to the newbie, "don't get discouraged". Discouragement will come. How else will courage grow?

IT'S HARDER FOR THOSE OUT FRONT

There is this strange sense which spiritual leaders -- even ones who decry all talk of 'spiritual warfare' -- get when they are about to make a major move when trusting God to lead them. All of a sudden, things start going wrong at just the wrong time. Stuff starts going wrong at work, a family member takes ill or goes into a crisis, friends get angry over the slightest things, doubts about the course of action start to crop up, cars break down, meetings get cancelled, and so on and on. These sort of things start piling up more and more as the step is closer to being taken. Satan knows how the Lord works, and how we work.

Should you find this happening to you when you lead, the main thing to keep in mind is: **relax**. God is still at work. It is the Spirit that makes Spirit-led deeds succeed. Not you. Trust God, pray hard, and love harder. When the time arrives, the Spirit gives a sense of confidence that will chase away the nervousness and the fear (Psalm 23:4). Confidence. Because even though **you're** no match for Satan, **God** is more than enough.

The second message is for those around someone else who is leading those major moves. They need your support, in person, in prayer, sometimes with a helping hand, sometimes with money or skills. Your job in spiritual conflict is to be with them in the time of trial, for that's no time to be alone. It's time for koinonia -- time to see just how much of a faith community we are. In 'war', some people get wounded. Expect it. God, through the community of the faithful, brings healing.

TAKING THE DEVIL HEAD-ON

Pentecostals believe very strongly in aiming directly at the Devil and his works. Sometimes, that's a must. However, there are many problems with using the 'frontal assault' approach by itself. For instance:

Let this world's tyrant rage /
In battle we'll engage /
His might is doomed to fail /
God's judgment must
prevail ! /
One little word subdues
him.
----- **Martin Luther**
(LBW #229 translation, *A
Mighty Fortress Is Our
God*)

1. The thing they are attacking may not be Satanic; it may just seem so. We need to understand why a person is the way they are. For example, mental disturbance may look like it's made by the devil, but usually it isn't. Instead of going off condemning people and popular culture, we need to find out **why** something that seems demonic is so popular. What is the symbolism touching in us that gives it so much effect? It'd be easier to get teenagers away from dabbling in the occult if we really thought about what the occult is appealing to in the teenage mind.
2. It takes time to develop a relationship of trust with those who are unknowingly doing or supporting the Devil's work. It takes time to show love, and it takes time for that love to be trusted. They're people, and *none* of them are beyond the reach of Christ's love.
3. Some people don't really let themselves feel the ugliness of spiritual warfare. They actually **want** to see spiritual combat, see devils lash out and experience extended struggles with sensational happenings. To them, it's a swashbuckling adventure, and they're the heroes. But think of real

guns-and-bombs war here : the carnage, death, destruction, and hatred -- there are some who find that exciting, too. They need to grasp the truth of how horrible such things are.

4. Satan's work is not at all simple. It goes on at all sorts of different levels from all sorts of thoughts, people, movements, and happenings. Hit it from only one angle, and the Devil works all the other angles that much harder.

So, direct attacks on a work of Satan have their place, but not by themselves. A badly-aimed attack is like a mischosen drug that can kill the patient.



WHAT IS SATAN?

So, what kind of a Satan does the Scriptures tell us about? The devil is shown as having **will**, **ability** (2 Corinthians 4:4), and much supernatural **power** (Ephesians 2:2), even if the power comes mostly from his skill at lies and deceit (2 Corinthians 11:14). Satan has identity (a sense of 'I'; Isaiah 14:12:20) and a purpose (John 13:2) (or anti-purpose; Mark 4:15). Satan is at once an instigator and a reactionary, the one who starts fights and the one whose reason for being (at least so far as he's concerned) is to frustrate and obstruct God's Kingdom in every way. The Devil is more than a match for any person standing on his or her own, or for that matter any group of human beings. We're no match for Satan on our own because we are out of kilter with the only One who has the power to defeat Satan. Christ, by coming into the created world, calls Satan's bluffs and flushes him out from where he lurks.

The Devil is not an anti-god. The Devil is more like a sham god, a face without a person behind it, all apparition and no substance. Satan can tempt (1 Chronicles 21:1), but can never fully be. Satan, like the archangel he once was (Revelation 12:7-9), can't make us do anything. Satan is the one who decided to have this spiritual warfare; God would rather give love than wage war. Martin Luther likened Satan to a snarling dog that is chained in place, who can only do you real harm if you're foolish enough to come too close. All Satan can do is use cunning tricks to play off our weaknesses and circumstances, to lead us to choose to do things which suck the life, hope, and energy out of ourselves and others -- especially others who did nothing to harm us. And each time we do, we lose a bit of the person behind our own face.

Satan has servants, too. These 'demons' or 'bad angels' do the day-to-day whisperings, the temptations within each moment of daily life. Give them a centimeter and they will try to take a kilometer.

If all this Satan talk puts you off, or if you think that Satan is just a construct or a symbol that people created to show how humans tend toward evil, **please hear what I'm saying, because it's very important and true :**

- there really is a force or entity or being from beyond us and from outside of us, calling into each and all of us to think evil, trying to get evil thoughts to turn into deeds, and meshing together or coordinating those deeds into an evil mess;
- When it's said that all of us are 'fallen', it means that some aspect of us is working to the same ends as this force or entity.
- if you don't believe at least this much about evil, you're not dealing with evil for what it really is.

One more thing : If such an entity really exists, it really doesn't matter much if we think that it's harmful to conceive of evil in this way, or if we think we'd be more at peace with ourselves if we ditched the idea of an entity behind evil, or if we think the human race should grow out of it, etc. etc.. What matters most is not what you or I think, but what actually **is**. And this entity actually **IS**. And since it is, then all those intelligent, rational thoughts take us away from really dealing with it, and thus do even more harm than the image of a personal devil.

SATAN AND SPIRITUAL THINGS

The spiritual gifts, most especially discernment and wisdom, are there in part to thwart Satan's efforts to put people in bondage. Satan's into this bondage stuff -- he's really one hyper-kinky dude. Satan can use whips, chains, domination and submission, but usually doesn't. More often, Satan uses twisted ideas, manipulations, half-truths, the lure of sex and victory and wealth and power, fear, vengeance, self-images of shame, and the burning anger of being wronged. Satan uses the show, drained of substance; the excitement, drained of reasons to celebrate. Satan deals marked cards from stacked decks, hands us loaded dice, and then urges us to gamble. Such things are Satan's idea of spiritual discipline, or more accurately, disspiritual un-discipline. And just as spiritual disciplines help to open us up more to the Holy Spirit, indulging in an evil way of life opens us up to an inner anarchy which (like all anarchies) eventually turns in on itself to crave authoritarian rule from the one who most wants that kind of absolute power.

The main ways of fending off the Devil are to live as a follower of Christ and to love your neighbors as yourself. In doing that, you give the Devil less room to play with. An act of spiritual warfare can be as simple as :

- telling the truth instead of lying;
- treating people with respect instead of cussing them out;
- ordering vegetable juice instead of a daiquiri;
- not going on a spending spree to keep your lifestyle more upper-class than your neighbor's,
- not flipping a finger at the guy who just cut you off in traffic, or maybe even to give a smile.
- gentle words for your girlfriend,
- a helping hand to an elderly woman in a store;
- an act of kindness done just to be kind.

You could choose to do something else, and that idea would not usually be from the Devil. **But that idea would still have to be chosen *against* when there is a more Christlike response to be chosen *for*.** Living as a Christian is not a neutral thing; it presses on to a higher calling. Thus spiritual warfare could be something like choosing not to abort that child, or choosing not to throw that punch or draw that knife, or choosing to stop trying to be a hip hop star so you can have time to work with troubled teens, or choosing not to work overtime because your family needs your presence more than your money. **Even things that you are allowed to do, things you are morally justified in doing, things that would make your life a lot easier, things that create opportunities -- even those things are to be turned away, if there is a more Godly choice to make.** The fight is fought in you and among the parts of society that are around you, in every moment. Every decision can be an act of spiritual warfare.

POSSESSION

The Devil never really 'possesses' (owns) anyone or any thing. The world is in revolt, but it is still the Creator's world, and the Devil can't change that. The Greek New Testament term for 'possession' is **daimonizomai**, which can be seen several ways. One way is to see it as demonic influence, where one is so twisted up by heeding the devil that one becomes 'demonized' - made like the Devil. The other way is as a demonic energy or impulse that not only stirs up evil in a person, but enables that person to do the Devil's work with an ability or power beyond what they would otherwise have -- a demonic dynamism. Bondage is created either way. It takes the bigger dynamism of Christ to free someone from that bondage, and it takes 'Christ-ization' to keep them free.

EXORCISM

The Gospels say that Jesus did exorcisms. He Himself fought directly with Satan during the wilderness temptations. When He commissioned His followers, He specifically gave them authority over the spirits (Mark 6:3-7,13; Matt 7:11, 10:8; Luke 10:18-20) and specifically over evil forces (Mark 3:14-15), in His name. In the case of Luke 10, it was not the Twelve disciples who were given the power, but a chosen **seventy** of Jesus' followers. This amazing authority has been passed on to the Body of believers when they act as a body. It's clear that Jesus saw there to be a battle of some sort against the Devil (Mark 1:23-28, 3:23; Luke 11:21-23). This was true also of the early church in Acts. That they understood the healing ministry as one made up in part of casting out "unclean spirits", is clear (Acts 5:16, 8:6-8, 19:12). But many church teachers over the years have taught that these could also be understood as acts of mercy on people who needed it badly, or as acts of psychological release.

The scene in Acts 16:16-18, however, demands to be understood in terms of authority over evil spirits. There, a slave girl has been filled with a spirit of divination (fortune-telling) which made lots of money for her masters. Paul cast this spirit out of her. Satan, of course, fought back through less-supernatural means, the raw greed of her masters. They sent for the authorities, who imprisoned Paul and Silas, which would lead to an earthquake and a witness to the jailer.

Some churches teach that Jesus' exorcisms, as well as His healings, were done to 'show' to everyone Jesus' authority and His true place in the divine scheme of things. There's an element of that (John 2:18, 6:30). But that's not the half of it. There's more! The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) treat the healings, exorcisms and other acts of power as **the start of the Kingdom's arrival**. The King was giving orders, and was seeing to it that they were carried out. Fending off Satan was not in the forefront of Jesus' mind; love was. While Jesus did powerful acts to undo Satan's works (1 John 3:8), the key motive was compassion for those whom Satan had bound (Mark 1:41).

Exorcism is an act, not a sign, and a gift only in the sense that it is a power given to the church as an organism and not merely to any one person in it except on behalf of it. It is the power to command the Devil to leave. It is another, more focused side to what some traditions call 'the power of the keys', the power given to the Body of believers, the church, to forgive and to damn. On its other sides it's more normally given to the Body's servants, the ordained ministers. It is something to be set apart from the other matters of the Spirit or the Church, because the Devil is so serious a thing. It calls for intense commitment and even more intense prayer. It's best done as a matter of teamwork, of people acting together as a mini-community because they love that particular person, group of people, or institution. The team's goal is to free that person from their bondage to Satan. It is that love, a love which is Christ's love at work in them, plus the hard work of stripping off the lies, peeling away the layers of self so that this love can get down to where the Devil is lodged within, where the miracle of casting out demons takes place. It is this love which gets whatever goodness there is in that person to join in making the liberation happen.

Some Christians believe in using exorcism rites over all sorts of matters that torment people, not just the hard-set, destructive evil of classic "possession" or demonization. Disease, mental illness, anger, confusion, conflictive relationships -- all are treated as the creation of some sort of demon sent to pester that person. And these Christians have developed a complex set of beliefs and practices around the effort to cast these demons out by name. They believe that there are ways that a demon can get a 'legal right' to be inside someone, or that a demon may come into someone just because they hang out at an 'occultically-occupied' location. They speak of vast demonic hierarchies, with each demon assigned to specific tasks. They speak of curses that can be passed along from one's forebears, or through a relationship with someone involved in the occult. They use elaborate and wearying rituals or courses of action which supposedly can force a demon to tell the truth and obey orders. Some of them even expect to see spinning heads and levitations and glowing eyes and such, as if this was a horror movie. They believe the real work should be left to a 'gifted', 'trained' specialist in casting out demons.

It's strange how the Bible does not support *any* of these beliefs and practices, if they were so important in the struggle against Satan. It's strange how the worldview one gets from all this resembles that of the occultic follower. Truthfully, the kind of things some call "demonic affliction" are more like strong forms of "temptation". Demons will ply their lying craft, but it is our sinful selves that pay heed. The responsibility is ours, not theirs. The Bible deals with temptation not through exorcism but by way of self-examination, confession, repentance, character-building, determination to resist, and trust in God. Our rescue from temptation is done by Christ, the power to resist from the Spirit -- not from an exorcist. The key is to remember Whose we are.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND THE PRINCIPALITIES

Note, please, that I'm not talking just about people. The Devil lodges himself in many groupings, and in many situations.

"For the powers are *incarnated* in very concrete forms, and their power is expressed in institutions or organizations....The spiritual warfare we are summoned to is concerned with human realities -- with injustice, oppression, authoritarianism, the domination of the state by money, the exaltation of sex or science, etc."

-- **Jacques Ellul**

Perhaps it's :

- in the general public of Germany during the Third Reich (World War II as, in part, an act of exorcism?)
- in the world's slave trade which ran ugly throughout the course of history but became its ugliest self in the 1700s and early 1800s because of the vast new US market.
- in the Khmer Rouge, in the days of the killing fields.
- at My Lai when US soldiers slaughtered villagers (war as, in part, an act of demonic possession?).
- in a corporate boardroom, as they plan a cover-up for the damage done by their product.
- in a school taken over by violence and disruption.
- in the mob psychology of the worst stages of the French Revolution.
- in the long string of 'bad popes' in the Middle Ages.

There is usually a person whose sellout to the Devil most characterizes the group's (for instance, Hitler or Pol Pot), but their possession is nonetheless a part of something bigger. The bigger it is, the more complete its captivity to the Father of Lies. And the more important it is for the witness of Christ's followers to take it on. But human society (and the people in it) denies the Devil even more than the evil he foments, and in the same ways : by putting both of them out of mind and out of our personal and

collective history. The Devil can be exorcised from any of these 'principalities' or any group of people no less than from any one person. But it takes Christ, love, and believers working together as a team or community, to get the Devil out.

A Letter On the Demonized

- > It's been some time since she the demons were cast out, but now she's back in a life of sin.
- > She tells lies, and curses at me. How can I tell if she's infested with stronger demons than before?

I would doubt that she is infested. But even if she is, you have to start asking, '**Why would she be welcoming them back?**' Unless that's found out, casting out demons is not enough, she'll open the front door for them again. It's hard to know through the lies, so the best thing is to take a good look at her character. What is she angry at? What is it which draws her into anger? Is she afraid of something? Or running away from something? These are things you might be able to discover as a friend; that is what you have to be for her **first**.

The next thing is, don't tackle this alone. Intercessory prayer works, and it works best when many people passionately pray for a person. So pray for her, **with others** -- at the very least, with a small circle of Christians, which may include others who know her.

Whether **she** can pull for herself with you depends on her awareness of her problem, and her willingness to face it. But at least **you** can pull for her.

Never give the devil a ride. He'll always want to drive.

A Letter on DID/MPD

<< **what is your perspective on Multiple Personality Disorder?**>>

I don't know, I'll have to ask my other selves what they think of it...

Seriously, MPD, a strong form of what is now called dissociative identity disorder (DID), is rare; some even question whether it really ever occurs. I had one who lived a few blocks away from me back in the late '60s, who was in and out of clinics, so I believe there is a real MPD. He had a full second personality, which grew out of his first, mainly because of sexual abuse by a relative and two very traumatic accidents.

It's nearly impossible to talk about MPD/DID without talking about 'possession', because most supposed instances of MPD since the start of the '70s involve some claim of demonic 'possession' or twistedness. (Note : the above example made no such claim; he came before the '70s wave hit.) It's given a lot of money and attention to a lot of real jerks, liars, nuts, and demagogues, both in Christian circles and outside of them. If you need a good source on that aspect of it, check out Jon Trott of Cornerstone magazine, or his book **Selling Satan**, which touches on it through the sad story of Mike Warnke. I don't address MPD or DID elsewhere in my Spirithome site because **I do not believe there is a real connection between Satanic stuff** (or any other spiritual phenomena) **and multiple personalities**.

In its section on frontiers for further investigation (para. 4 bullet 3), the **Lausanne Committee's**

Nairobi Consultation on spiritual warfare urged Christians to develop a diagnostic approach for telling whether the other personality was a demon or a DID personality. Some differences are already well-known. A demonic personality is willingly taken on from an outside source, whether directly or step by step (decision by decision). Unlike a multiple personality, a demonic personality isn't really part of the person at all but a different 'being' (or maybe 'un-being') which pulls strings or lays bait from within its host, slowly shaping the host into its evil image. It will *push existing weaknesses to an extreme*. Demons or Satan can never actually own or possess anyone. But they don't have to, because for whatever reasons the host is joining them in their game. (That is why I don't use the term 'possession' to describe it.)

WHAT KIND OF TRUTH SETS US FREE?

It's common for people to say that "the truth will set you free". But mere factual knowledge, standing on its own, can't do anything to the Devil. The more we know, the more places that Satan can grip in order to twist our minds. And even if somehow you were able to know how to stop Satan from twisting your knowledge, Satan could still get at you through your body, with accident or tempting sensations or illness. And even if you were able (as Job was) to defy Satan as he works against your body, Ol' Scratch could still scratch away at you through your relationships. And so on. There are just too many ways to get at us.

There is a truth that sets us free. One truth that gives strength to all the other truths. Jesus, the Christ. And, since the key truth is a person not a thing, our freedom is found in our relationship with that person. In a relationship, you bring all aspects of yourself into play : thoughts, knowledge, feelings, experiences, memories, deeds, tastes, time. If everything about you is involved somehow with Christ, it doesn't matter what angle of approach Satan uses, Christ will already be there. Even the Devil's worst wickedness can be turned into good by God. The Christ who wins the spiritual battles is the same Christ who won the war. What could be more secure than that?

How to be an instrument of peace.

**Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
 Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
 Where there is injury, pardon;
 Where there is doubt, faith;
 Where there is despair, hope;
 Where there is darkness, light;
 Where there is sadness, joy.
 O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
 to be consoled as to console,
 to be understood as to understand,
 to be loved as to love.
 For it is in giving that we receive;
 It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
 And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.**

SOME QUOTES TO THINK ABOUT

"I am persuaded that the powers of darkness have pulled off an amazing coup. While the American Church is undoubtedly the wealthiest church ever in education, discretionary time, and money, a major segment of that church has been lured into believing it cannot make a difference for world peace or social justice. Ironically, in this deterministic view of the future, not only can't the church make a difference, neither can **God**. This eschatology of despair unwittingly seems to lock God outside of history, characterizing God as an important absentee landlord who is unable to effect any real change in the present world. All God gets to do is bring down the final curtain at the end of history."
 ----- **Tom Sine**, in **Sojourners** magazine, regarding the kinds of end-times theories circulating in the Fundamentalist and Pentecostalist circles.

"The Devil is easy to identify. He appears when you're terribly tired and makes a very reasonable request which you know you shouldn't grant."
 ----- **Fiorello La Guardia**, former mayor of New York City

"Those who are their own god will end up consigning themselves to the Hell they built for their enemies."
 ----- **Unknown**, on-line.

"When it comes to being possessed, ask not whether you have been a little loony; ask rather whether lying has become your life-style."
 ----- **Lewis Smedes**, **A Pretty Good Person**, p.102

Study Questions

If you're studying spiritual warfare as a group, ask these questions among yourselves, and share your answers with the group.

1. Do you think that you've ever met Satan? (I'm not talking 'symbolically', or 'it was like Satan' -- I mean the real presence of the Evil One, so strong you can almost touch it.)
2. If you've ever chosen to come forward publicly to do something in Christ's name : did things start happening which drew your attention away from doing it? What sort of things? Did you do it anyway?
3. The theme of Jesus' Lordship runs throughout the letters of John and Paul, most notably Philippians 2:9-11. Try to picture how Jesus' reign would break into your life. What would it be like?
4. In what ways can our thoughts or feelings be 'twisted'? In what ways has this happened to you?
5. There are times when parts of the Church have been 'twisted' into deep evil. Can you think of an example? What happened to bring the church out of it?
6. How do you react when you see or hear similes or images (in movies, TV, music, or in books) that represent deep evil and the demonic? Does anything stir in you? Do you ever think about having powers and using them on others? What can or should Christians do about the use of these images, if anything?

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