

## **BACK TO THE BASICS OF FAITH**

### *Beware of Evildoers*

These days, it isn't politically correct to refer to an individual as evil. For most folks the word just sounds and looks too much like the word "*devil*". And since they don't want to believe the devil exists, it's hard for them to swallow that some human beings have his characteristics, but in fact they do. Are those folks inherently evil? Perhaps some are, but one thing is for sure, evildoers are very real and a great many of them are living in our present society. Some congregate together and have organized themselves in such a way as to cause widespread harm and devastation, and others are sprinkled throughout our every day existence; if left to their own devices, they'll slowly and methodically prick away at us until we're only a fraction of our former selves. Wherever they are...whoever they are, whether large or small, one thing is for sure, we need to be a great deal more prepared for them than what we are right now.

Most of us tend to turn a blind eye towards the evildoers who are sprinkled throughout our everyday environment. As a matter of fact, for the most part we don't even know they are evildoers until they've managed to whack off a significant piece of our stability and peace. A whole bunch of us call them friends and (watch out now) a few of us call them sisters and brothers in the Lord. We do so because we either lack discernment or we're thickheaded and won't listen to what the Spirit is saying. No longer can we afford the luxury of either. We have to know what an evildoer is and what their objectives are. We also need to be able to recognize some common signs before an attack and what to do in order to steer clear. This teaching will hopefully help to make some of this a little more clear for you.

Now we've covered a bit about this before. In a past lesson, we talked about "*How to Deal with An Enemy*". We want to go more in depth with this teaching and take some time to expound upon some practical information. This practical information will help you spot an evildoer a mile away, and head him or her off before they are able to do any significant damage to your life.

And let me prepare you, when I talk about practical information, I'm speaking in a spiritual context. What do I mean by that? Well, practically speaking, when the average person tells you to beware of an evildoer, you might get your *dukes* up, so to speak. You might get ready to do some physical battling. And since most of us equate "*practical*" with "*how to*", you would also assume that I'm going to teach you how to fight, or how to protect and shield yourself. Well, that's partly true, but I hope I to teach you a few things that take "*practical*" to a whole other level.

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Spirituality IS a whole other level; it's inter-dimensional living. Ephesians 2:6 NLT says "*For he raised us from the dead along with Christ, and we are seated with him in the heavenly realms--all because we are one with Christ Jesus.*" We know that our feet are firmly planted on earth, but a part of us is in another realm. Our minds, hearts, and souls are anchored in the heavenly realm because we have been made new creatures through our blessed Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We are to speak, think, and behave as though we are walking around in heaven before the presence of our Heavenly Father, even though our bodies remain right here on earth. Why are we to do this? We are to do this because we understand that we were created and intended for that purpose—to be like Christ. We understand that earth is good grooming ground to practice, and that everything within it is to assist our efforts to be the best Christians we can be.

### **1Peter 5:8 (The Message)**

*8 Keep a cool head. Stay alert. The Devil is poised to pounce, and would like nothing better than to catch you napping. Keep your guard up.*

Talk about practical information, you can't get any clearer than 1 Peter 5:8. It tells you to keep your cool and stay alert at all times. God knows that we have a tendency to react to whatever is happening around us, and this will always get us into trouble. It's a play right into the devil's hands. The Father has given us an obvious warning about an enemy who isn't always so obvious. We don't get a visual of a little red man with a pitchfork whenever our well-being is threatened. The devil is much more subtle than that. He uses individuals that are already planted within our everyday environment.

Evildoers are those who allow themselves to be used by the devil. Usually, they've partnered up with him unknowingly and if asked, they would probably say that they are some of the best people in the world. This is the subtlety we often miss. They can appear to be pretty good people, and everyone seems to like them well enough, but their intentions are superficial. Their objective is to steal your focus. The moment you take your eye off the ball, they will pounce—and trust me, all it takes is a moment.

1Peter 5:8 reminds us that we have a purpose and it is integral to God's agenda. This is something we are guilty of grossly underestimating. We underestimate how important to God it is that we stay on the battlefield. He needs us to be on the case 24/7, protecting and nurturing our spirituality—building our intimacy with Him through Christ—growing and abounding in good stuff.

God is forever showing and telling us the very things that will keep our lives in a positive cycle—one where we are exceedingly blessed and we are also blessing others. This cycle is paramount to you remaining on a platform that lifts you higher and higher towards the things of

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God. It is a cycle of synchronized momentum, one where promotions and opportunities abound. The moment you take your eye off the prize, the moment you look back, you stand to lose something valuable, and this is the moment the evildoer is waiting for.

Make no mistake about it, this is spiritual warfare...not a warm and fuzzy moment when a nice apology will do the trick. An evildoer will burrow in and hit you from an angle you least expect, so you can't expect that the use of physical armor will suffice. Although his attack may feel very tangible, the devil is a spiritual enemy and you will have to know something about the spiritual to stay alert and protected.

The most important thing to know about the spiritual is that God gives us everything we need to recognize some common signs before an attack so that we steer clear. We see in Ephesians 6, that we have a whole host of spiritual accoutrement to help us stand amidst the trickery of the devil, but we don't always use it. We don't always do what we are supposed to do and therefore leave ourselves exposed. Often we don't even realize that our back isn't covered. We're moving along with our groove thang, thinking we got it going on, and our attention is completely involved somewhere else. These are the times when a person we least expect will say something that throws a monkey wrench into our game.

The unexpected person is someone I like to call "*a truth talker*". It's that person who may not appear to be the most spiritual person in the world, but they are sent by God to tell you the truth whether or not you want to hear it. There are not a whole lot of these folks walking around, but if you find one you had better do your best to keep them close. This person knows how to cut through all the layers of superficiality and speak a truth so razor sharp that it shocks you into awareness. Unlike the evildoer who tells you whatever you want to hear, a truth talker will tell you the truth, and sometimes the truth hurts.

All of us can become too self-involved for our own good. This is a place where we're not feeding our souls but feeding our egos. Staying in this space for too long is dangerous and will almost always end with you being vulnerable to a disruptive attack. Usually a truth talker will intervene with a sting right before you really get into hot water. From this day forward, pay attention to the sting!!! It will help you refocus your attention and begin to press into the Father in a way that gets you back on track.

The important thing to understand is that the Father always warns us prior to an attack, and there are many ways in which He does that; we just have to learn to recognize them. There are times when our dreams are fraught with disturbing images, images for which we have personally developed a particular disdain. These are sometimes warnings that we are losing perspective. We are reacting to things in our environment rather than taking authority over them

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through Jesus Christ. We are allowing situations and people to make us angry and resentful rather than trusting in the Lord and staying prayerful and calm. So sometimes our dreams can help us veer away from danger by warning us to stay away from certain people and places. These are things we cannot afford to miss.

Take this challenge, look back over the times that an evildoer has caused havoc in your life. If you'll think carefully you'll discover that God provided the warnings, but you didn't recognize them. He warned the church through the Apostle Peter in 2 Peter 3:17 (NLT). God didn't wait until they had fallen prey to the tactics of the evildoers, but said "I am warning you ahead of time, dear friends, so that you can watch out and not be carried away by the errors of these wicked people. I don't want you to lose your own secure footing." God warned them ahead of time, and if He did it for them, He'll do it for you too.

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