

Spiritual Housecleaning

By Diane W. Hawkins

June 2000

Although it is only February, Spring is already tantalizing us with its imminent arrival and propelling our thoughts toward the many clean-up chores needing to be done in our yards and homes. What an excellent reminder this can be to give attention to spiritual housecleaning as well!

Demons can enter our homes via contaminated individuals and/or objects, or they can be deliberately sent on a specific mission. Whether we rent our homes or own them, we possess the legal authority to dedicate and claim our domain for the true Holy Creator God and the purposes of His kingdom. On that authority we can demand in the name of Jesus Christ that anything unholy depart immediately. If demons are legally attached to an individual currently in our home, we cannot force them to leave, but we can demand in the name of Jesus Christ that their powers be completely bound from any expression within the boundaries of our property. If you possess anything which was originally made to serve a role in some form of pagan worship, you might want to consider disposing of it. Even if it can be spiritually cleansed, it certainly would not glorify our God, who is a jealous God (Ex. 34:13-14; Acts 19:18-19).

Inviting someone who has the gift of discerning spirits to go with you through your home room by room can be very helpful, enabling you to identify particular items which need attention. You might be surprised at the subtle, or not so subtle, changes occurring in your home after doing these things. Many have reported a sense of decreased tension or conflict or children being less bothered by nightmares, etc.

To sanitize a physically contaminated area of our home, we quickly run for the bleach, ammonia, or Lysol. Sometimes we fail to realize that we have resources available for the spiritual sanitization of our homes as well. While the offending culprits are as invisible to the human eye as bacteria and viruses, we can develop a sensitivity to discerning their presence and learn how to dispel them.

Even if you are not gifted in discerning the presence of demons, you can create an environment in your home which makes it extremely uncomfortable for them. While we usually think of demons being the ones who torment people, they are also subject to torment themselves, especially in the presence of God. This was clearly the case when Jesus confronted the demonized man of the Gadarenes (Mark 5:7).

While the presence of God is obviously the most powerful deterrent to demonic activity, the power of His Word and His name are also undeniably effective for halting their agenda (Matthew 4:1-11; Acts 16:16-18). Therefore, by playing tapes of Scripture being read or music verbally praising God, you can cause great torment to any forces of darkness which are present, giving them tremendous motivation to leave. This is useful and effective at any time but is highly recommended before, after, and perhaps to a limited extent during, times of direct spiritual warfare.

One must also keep in mind, however, that when demons have legal grounds for attachment to human beings, they cannot automatically leave to escape the torment caused by these things, and in such cases the person may also feel the demon's torment. This has variously been described as feeling like "your skin is crawling" or "electricity is coursing through your bloodstream." We therefore urge sensitivity, as well as compassion, in the use of verbal praise music and the reading of Scripture in the presence of individuals who are known to be demonized or who may show an adverse response to such things. Sometimes verbally commanding the demon(s) involved (in the name of Jesus) not to pass on the torment to the individual or to be temporarily separated from the human being may help in these incidents. It is a fine line to walk in defying the demons while treating the individual with love and respect.

Preparation for Spiritual Warfare

By Diane W. Hawkins

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No soldier ever enters a battlefield without adequate preparation, no matter how confident he feels. In like manner we must never take our participation in spiritual warfare lightly. Although our enemy is unseen, his power and intelligence far surpass our own. Because our success depends totally on the power of God working through us, we must be sure that our lives are a clear channel through which He can work and fully avail ourselves of the spiritual resources He offers us. Therefore, prayerfully:

EXAMINE AND CLEANSE YOURSELF FROM ALL SIN.

- Ask God to reveal any sin in your life which would hinder His Spirit flowing through you.
- Confess it.
- Claim the blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins (1 John 1:7).
- Repudiate all personal arrogance or self-reliance in the spiritual battle.

CHECK YOUR SPIRITUAL ARMOR (Ephesians 6:10-18).

- Affirm your **salvation** from Satan's kingdom and possession of Christ's **righteousness**.
- Express your commitment to **truth** and **righteousness** in every area of your life.
- Claim the **peace** of God over all fear and anxiety.
- Declare your reliance on the **Word of God** which He will give you at the moment of need.

CLAIM YOUR SPIRITUAL RESOURCES.

- Your position of authority with Christ at the right hand of the Father (Ephesians 1:19-23; 2:6)
- The fullness of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18)
 - His guidance (John 16:13)
 - The Spirit of wisdom and revelation (Ephesians 1:17)
 - The Spirit of wisdom and understanding (Isaiah 11:2)
 - The Spirit of counsel and power (Isaiah 11:2)
 - The Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:2)
- The protection of the blood of Jesus over yourself and all those involved.

Conversing with Demons

By Diane W. Hawkins

April 2001

On some occasions demons may speak through the person with whom they are associated. Sometimes a limited conversation with this voice is necessary in order to ascertain that it is actually a demon speaking rather than the individual. In these instances speaking with the demon is beneficial in revealing or confirming its presence.

When a demon speaks through the person in the course of a deliverance attempt, however, it is usually best to command the demon's silence except to answer specific questions directed to it. These questions should be limited to those essential to the deliverance process. Using the demon to gain other supernatural knowledge is both unwise and dangerous.

First of all, it is succumbing to the exact seduction which Satan used to ensnare Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Secondly, doing so ascribes value to the demon and in a sense ingratiates you to him. Thirdly, demons are masters of deception and cannot be trusted to speak truth (unless you specifically bind them to doing this).

The occasional times when asking legitimate questions is appropriate include:

A. Requesting a demon's name

In Scripture the only question Jesus ever asked of a demon was "What is your name?" and he only did this once (Mark 5:9). Therefore, even this is not always necessary. However, it seems that just knowing the name of a person or an entity may in some instances constitute a step of authority over them. Names were extremely important in Scripture as evidenced by the number of times God specifically changed a person's name to more accurately reflect some characteristic in their life. Also, when Jacob wrestled with the Angel of the Lord, he would not give his name to Jacob (Gen. 32:22-30). Knowing the demon's name sometimes also reveals the function or nature of the demon so you can be alert to specific characteristics in the individual which might indicate that it has returned for whatever reason.

B. Requesting the legal grounds for their attachment

Just as the physical world usually operates under certain inviolable laws of nature, so also does the spiritual realm follow a strict legal code. If an individual has done something that has given a demon legal grounds to be attached to him or her, it will usually not leave until those rights for attachment are removed through renunciation or confession. Therefore, when a demon does not leave immediately when commanded to do so in the power and authority of Jesus' name, it is sometimes helpful to ask what gives it the right to be attached to the individual. Be sure, however, to bind it first in the name of Jesus to tell only the truth. Sometimes this is not necessary because the individual already knows what permitted the demon to gain its right of attachment. At other times God can provide the necessary insight regarding the demon's legal right to be there.

C. Requesting information concerning their rank and hierarchy

In difficult or resistant cases it may occasionally be helpful to know the rank of the demon and whether he is under authority to a higher level spiritual being, in which case the spiritual warfare must be directed against the higher ranked being. Jesus taught that one must first bind the strongman before he can successfully plunder his house (Mat. 12:29). Jude 8-9 also indicates that man should not attempt to come against the highest ranked demons (celestial beings) but instead ask the Lord to rebuke them.

In case there are also demons ranked below the one you are addressing, it is wise to command that he take all other demons under him along as he exits, including those shared by different parts of a dissociated individual. Sometimes it will be necessary, however, for the various alter-identities involved to each break the legal ground providing its attachment.

The Spiritual Infrastructure behind World Events

By Diane W. Hawkins

November 2001

In this issue of *Prayer Matters* I feel led to focus on the dynamics occurring in the spiritual realm in conjunction with the events that have so dramatically awakened our country and many others from a false sense of national security and led us into a new kind of war. As we face the uncertainty of what this may develop into, we cannot say how near or far we may be to the "end of the age," but we know that the current strife fits somewhere along the continuum leading in that direction.

In order to pray most effectively concerning this "new war," Christians must realize that all that is happening in the physical realm is accompanied by or, perhaps more accurately, directed by the forces of darkness in the spiritual realm. 1 John 5:19 says that "the whole world is under the control of the evil one." This was one of the concessions God gave to Satan when He established Satan's role as an alternative object of devotion for mankind. In order for man to have a choice regarding the object of his love and worship in the spiritual realm, God actually created a powerfully alluring supernatural being to be His competitor.

Satan is not really seeking a love relationship with man as God is, but he desires to win man's allegiance so he can use man to accomplish his ultimate goal of world domination. Ephesians 2:2 says that Satan is actively working in "those who are disobedient." Therefore those plotting to disrupt the current power structure of the world are essentially pawns in Satan's hand. Being by very nature a sly and crafty being who was created "full of wisdom" (Ezek. 28:12), the schemes he devises are extremely shrewd as we have certainly seen in recent weeks. His demonic forces also encircle the globe, giving him a worldwide grasp of the affairs of the nations. He seemingly establishes some sort of parallel, international infrastructure in the spiritual realm with his own hierarchy of spiritual authorities assigned to each country (Dan. 10:13, 20; Eph. 6:12). This spiritual domain over which Satan is the reigning "prince" is known as the "kingdom of the air" (Eph. 2:2) and is generally believed to be the second heaven (2 Cor. 12:2).

In spite of his ruling position in this realm and the other advantages that God has given him, Satan cannot automatically accomplish his will on earth. He can do so only with man's cooperation. Even though the warring entities in the spiritual realm ultimately serve either God or Satan, the battle they are engaged in is focused on gaining supremacy over the earthly realm. Therefore, man seems to play a critical role in this battle. In fact, it appears that the effectiveness of the two sides of the battle may be directly related to the strength of the followers of God and the followers of Satan (in his many counterfeit "religions") on earth. Rather than just being a numbers game, however, certain godly actions, such as repentance, righteousness, prayer, fasting, and spiritual warfare (2 Chron. 7:14; Dan. 10:1-2; 2 Cor. 6:7; 10:3-5) seem to be key factors in strengthening God's side of the battle. Presumably certain acts of loyalty, sacrifice, and worship do the same for Satan's side.

Therefore, as our armed forces fight for the cause of freedom and justice on earth, God's children must actively engage themselves in those activities which strengthen the angelic hosts of heaven warring against the forces of darkness in the spiritual realm (Dan. 10; Eph. 6:12). This is not a time for Christian soldiers to take an "R & R." We must be fully armed, on high alert, and actively engaged in battle.

How to be a Good Christian Soldier

By Diane W. Hawkins

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In our last issue of *Prayer Matters* I focused on the dynamics occurring in the spiritual realm in connection with the current evil and terror being perpetrated in our physical world. I pointed out that Satan has temporarily been given a measure of authority over the countries of the world (Luke 4:5-6; 1 John 5:19). Since he lost his challenge of God's supremacy in the heavens, his goal is now set on gaining supremacy in the earthly realm. Towards this end he has seemingly established a parallel, international infrastructure in the spiritual realm with his own hierarchy of spiritual beings assigned to each country (Dan. 10:13, 20; Eph. 6:12; Rev. 20:1-3).

Satan can only accomplish his goal, however, with the cooperation of man. Because of man's free will, nothing is set in concrete concerning the extent of Satan's success or the timing of it. However, the burgeoning numbers of ritual abuse survivors surfacing around the globe who are groomed and programmed to carry out Satan's agenda give evidence of Satan's forward momentum. Of course, we know that God will eventually interrupt Satan's plans, no matter how far they get, and bring in His own eternal kingdom while dooming Satan to everlasting punishment (Rev. 19:17—20:10).

In the meantime, however, the strength of Satan's forces and the extent of his success in the world depends on the number of human recruits he can deceive into supporting his oftentimes camouflaged agenda and their acts of devotion to him as well as the degree of opposition he encounters from the angelic hosts of God's army. By the same token the strength of God's side in this battle seems to depend on the number and spiritual attributes and activities of those committed to His kingdom. For this reason we must not stand idly by but learn to become active Christian soldiers on behalf of the Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

As any good soldier, we must understand the weapons with which we are to fight in this battle. Because the real confrontation takes place in the spiritual world, we must have weapons that are effective in that realm (2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:12). Ephesians 6:14-17 describes the spiritual armor God's soldiers must wear. While the Helmet of Salvation is given to us as a gift from God (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8-9), the rest of our protective armor consists of character traits we must develop and manifest in our daily lives. These include truth, righteousness, peace, and faith.

The primary offensive weapons which God's people can wield are the Sword of the Spirit and prayer (Eph. 17-18). The Sword of the Spirit refers to the internally spoken Word of God delivered by the Holy Spirit at the moment of need when confronting evil. This is something that we must learn to rely upon and boldly articulate when it is given.

Prayer, on the other hand, is initiated by us, and the prayers of righteous men and women in God's kingdom are powerfully effective (James 5:16). Too often, however, Christians focus their prayers on their personal needs and the material realm. They neglect to pray against the spiritual elements affecting their country and the overall advancement of the Kingdom of God in the world, or their prayers are weakened by the lack of appropriate character traits being demonstrated in their lives. Prayers uttered by those who merely give lip service to God's kingdom have little effect in the spiritual realm. Only those who are so committed to Him that they allow their lives to be truly transformed by the Holy Spirit can function as true Christian soldiers in God's army, joining ranks with all those who earnestly pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven (Mat. 6:10).

How to Be a Good Christian Soldier

Part 2: Character Traits as Spiritual Weapons

By Diane W. Hawkins

April 2002

In our last few issues of *Prayer Matters* we have been looking at how to be active Christian soldiers who are able to affect the direction of the spiritual battle going on in the heavenlies in relationship to the political struggles for power occurring in our physical world. We have seen that the spiritual armor, which God has instructed us to wear if we are to participate in this battle, includes developing the character traits of truth, righteousness, faith, and peace so that they are consistently manifested in our daily lives (Eph. 10-18).

In Romans 13:12-14 (NIV), Paul also writes about “putting on the armor of light” (NIV). This armor is contrasted with practicing “deeds of darkness” and gratifying “the desires of the sinful flesh.” It is accompanied by the commands to “behave decently” and to be clothed “with the Lord Jesus Christ.” In other words, to be properly suited up in the “armor of light,” we are to allow the Lord Jesus to live His life through us and act like He would. So again we see righteous character traits portrayed as protective armor in the spiritual battle.

Other passages indicate that godly character traits serve not only in a protective manner but also can play an offensive role in the spiritual battle. In 2 Corinthians 6:3-10 Paul speaks of having “weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left” (vs. 7, NIV). In the context we see how thoroughly committed he was to having genuine righteousness characterize his life, no matter what the circumstances. This included the traits of purity, patience, kindness, endurance, sacrifice, sincere love, and truthful speech. Through this means Paul was able to maintain his credibility and fend off his attackers.

Later in chapter 10 he speaks again of the “weapons” we fight with in the spiritual battle, stating that they have “divine power” to demolish demonic strongholds as well as every argument and phony substitute set in place to usurp the true knowledge of God (vss. 4-5; NIV). It is very probable that he is referring back to the “weapons of righteousness” that he mentioned in chapter 6. He also points out that these weapons are not only effective in battling the strongholds we encounter in the lives of others but also in sanctifying the thoughts of our own minds.

Christian soldiers must exercise consistent, daily discipline in keeping their “weapons of righteousness” in good operating condition just as soldiers fighting in the physical realm do. They must also maintain their strength by drawing daily sustenance from the Word of God and keep the lines of communication with their “Commander in Chief” open.

How to Be a Good Christian Soldier

Part 3: The Relationship of Humility, Fasting, and Spiritual Warfare

By Diane W. Hawkins

July 2002

In the last issue of *Prayer Matters* we continued to look at how godly character traits serve as both offensive and defensive “weapons” in spiritual warfare. This is seen most clearly in the “spiritual armor” in Ephesians 6:10-18 but is evident in other passages as well (e.g., 2 Cor. 6:7; 10:3-5). In this issue I would like to focus our attention on the particular trait of humility along with the godly discipline of fasting.

Jesus was our ultimate example of humility, relinquishing His exalted position in the Godhead to become a servant, even to the extent of laying down His life for the benefit of all mankind. This is the attitude that we too are admonished to have, always regarding others as more important than ourselves (Phil. 3:3-8). In 2 Corinthians 2:7 we see that arrogance is so unbecoming and detrimental to a Christian soldier that God allowed Satan to afflict the Apostle Paul in some permanent way—just to keep him humble.

Second Chronicles 7:14 reveals that when the people of a given country demonstrate humility, coupled with genuine repentance, God will grant forgiveness on a national level and turn away the curses of evil brought on that country for their disobedience. Humility is therefore crucial in the life of a Christian soldier fighting for God’s victory over evil and His blessing on a particular country.

In Daniel 10 we see this faithful prophet of God single-handedly humbling himself and fasting as he prayed earnestly to God about the state of his nation, Israel. Twenty-one days later an angel appeared to him, assuring him that he had been dispatched immediately when Daniel first humbled himself before God and sought insight from Him. So Daniel’s humility (perhaps combined with his other godly character traits) brought an immediate answer from God, but for twenty-one days that answer was delayed because of spiritual warfare occurring between the angel and spiritual forces of evil associated with other specific countries. Therefore, it seems that the fasting that Daniel was also doing through this period was influential in the angel prevailing over his opponents in the spiritual realm.

When the angel arrived, he also told Daniel that no one supported him in this spiritual battle except for Michael, Daniel’s “prince.” This is a very interesting statement from which we can draw a number of possible inferences. First of all, how encouraging it is to learn that Daniel had a particular “prince,” or angel, specifically assigned to him! While Daniel was a specially appointed prophet of God, this is a significant supporting passage (along with Heb. 1:14) to the idea that every child of God has a “guardian” angel.

We might also assume from the passage that the angel sent with the message to Daniel was not supported because no one else was actively involved in prayer and fasting on behalf of the nation of Israel at that time besides Daniel. This is sad and certainly

emphasizes the value of an entire army of Christian soldiers involved in warfare for a country rather than a “lone ranger.” On the other hand, it reveals the powerful influence of even one individual willing to prevail in prayer and fasting.

It also seems that Daniel was not overtly waging spiritual warfare, but his prayer and fasting were serving that purpose in the spiritual realm. Ephesians 6:18, which immediately follows the description of the spiritual armor, also seems to indicate that the dynamic of persistent prayer, coupled with the godly character traits represented by the armor, translates into effective spiritual warfare on behalf of the saints without the individual overtly engaging in it. Second Chronicles 7:14 would seem to bear this out as well.

The example in Daniel 10 illustrates that the dynamic of fasting further enhances spiritual warfare and the effectiveness of prayer. This, too, is supported by numerous other passages, which we will continue to examine in our next issue.