

MARK JENKINS MINISTRIES

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What's In Your Tent?

Dear Friend,

What a sight to behold we must be to our Father God as we, the spirit, go to war with our flesh for dominance. It's nothing short of the actual hand-to-hand combat experienced by soldiers in a war. Through the empowering of the Holy Ghost, the spirit man wars with the flesh to eradicate the weaknesses that satan uses against us to control us. Often we are unconscious of the presence of these weaknesses until either the enemy puts pressure on them or the Holy Ghost targets them for destruction. However, we are each responsible for giving God what He needs to deliver us from the control of our flesh.

Paul describes this struggle in the following verses. (Galatians 5:16-17)

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. (17) For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that you cannot do the things that you would.”

The “Spirit” Paul is referring to here is our reborn human spirit, not the Holy Spirit, although the Holy Spirit does live inside our reborn human spirit. And, the flesh consists of the body, as well as, any part of the soul yet to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. This battle is for domination. Who is going to rule; the flesh or the spirit?

Sadly, what is often the case is that the flesh is allowed to continue to dominate the reborn human spirit, causing the person to live a life far below their potential. All the while, God has provided His children with tools that when utilized will put the flesh in its place. These tools include His Word, the ministry of the Holy Ghost revealing His Word, and the edification and mortification process, just to name a few.

Often times we are blind to these weaknesses lurking in the dark recesses of our flesh. Don't be deceived into thinking; “Nothing is in my flesh”. Anyone so naïve

as to believe that lie is exactly where the enemy wants them to be. At will, he can torment them by simply applying pressure to those weaknesses until the person finds themselves choosing to do what he knows he shouldn't be doing.

In case you don't believe that's true ask yourself this; what was the reason for your last lapse to the flesh? If you are brutally honest with yourself you have to admit that there was something on the inside that wanted to go along with whatever temptation the enemy used to lure you into sin. If that little something wasn't there, then the enemy would have nothing to use against you.

Say for example a Christian tells a lie, what was it that convinced them that it was better to lie and sin than to tell the truth? Christians who are head over heels in love with Jesus are not looking for reasons to sin more. But, something on the inside convinced them that they wanted to sin more than they wanted to resist the temptation. The enemy has studied each of us so well that he knows right where to put the most pressure in order to produce the desired result. The key then is to eliminate those things in our flesh that the enemy uses against us to draw us into sin. (James 1:14)

“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.”

In my own life, I have found that many of the temptations the enemy successfully used to lure me into sin no longer work today. The reason is because whatever was in my flesh that the enemy used against me has been eliminated, through utilizing God's methods of eradication. Freedom in those areas is the equivalent of when Israel fought the inhabitants of their Promised Land and won. For me, each weakness in my flesh that is conquered means I'm taking one more step in my own Promised Land.

By looking at the events surrounding Israel's taking possession of their Promised Land, three illustrations emerge demonstrating the potential problems we face for **not** dealing with our flesh. Through these illustrations we can see God's desire for us to dethrone the flesh and take possession of our Promised Land - a “reborn spirit” dominated life.

This might come as a surprise, but the devil isn't the problem. The problem is that thing inside the believer that the devil targets to lure them into sin. If that “weakness” were gone, the devil wouldn't have anything to use against them. For a believer to say; “the devil made me do it” shows a lack of understanding of the real problem. The truth is that the devil does not have the power to make anyone do anything, including sin. If he did he would make everyone commit

suicide before accepting Jesus. We sin because we want to sin. By eliminating the “weakness” we remove the devil’s advantage against us.

Before Israel entered the Promised Land, God gave them these instructions. (Deuteronomy 7:2)

“And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them:”

The only way for Israel to enjoy the land God had promised them was to defeat its inhabitants. God didn’t want Israel making peace agreements with them He wanted Israel to destroy them. So long as Israel obeyed God’s every instruction for how to defeat their enemy and what to do with the spoils of war they were unstoppable. When they disobeyed God in any way their enemy triumphed over them.

The same is true for us; although the inhabitants we must defeat aren’t on the outside they are on the inside. The battles we are waging are just as real as those fought by Israel. That being the case, we can glean some valuable information from Israel’s experiences. In turn, we can apply what we learn so that our spirit can gain ascendancy over the flesh thereby taking possession of our own land.

The setting for this illustration takes place following Israel’s first conquest in the Promised Land; Jericho. Everything had gone exactly as God said. The walls had fallen down and Israel was victorious. As is generally the case, to the victor go the spoils. But, these spoils weren’t to be kept by the people they were to be consecrated unto the Lord. (Joshua 6:18-19)

“And you, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest you make yourselves accursed, when you take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. (19) But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord: they shall come into the treasury of the Lord.”

Israel was not supposed to keep any of the treasure for themselves, but rather present it unto the treasury of God. By obeying God’s instruction, Israel would have continued to enjoy successfully taking possession of more of their land. Sadly, that was not the case. Following their victory at Jericho, Israel attempted to overthrow Ai and they were soundly defeated. (Joshua 7:4-5)

“So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai. (5) And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men... wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.”

How did this happen? Hadn't God already told Joshua that every place the sole of his feet stepped God had given to him? (Joshua 1:3) Had God changed His mind? Was Ai the exception? To the casual observer it might appear that God's Word to Israel failed. The real truth of the matter was that someone disobeyed by keeping some of the spoils from Jericho. This disobedience opened the door to their enemy to defeat them. Their failure to obey God resulted in God's power being separated from Israel. (Joshua 7:11-12)

“Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their stuff. (12) Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except you destroy the accursed from among you.”

This act of disobedience threatened to forever separate God from Israel. The accursed had to be found and destroyed. How in the world could Joshua locate the accursed among the entire population of Israel? It would require God's intervention to identify the guilty party. (Joshua 7:17)

“And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Juda was taken.”

Joshua asked Achan what he had done and he said, (Joshua 7:21)

“When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.”

In all of Israel, one man's disobedience cost Israel the lives of the 36 men who died at Ai and it threatened to permanently sever God's relationship with them. One man out of millions of Israelites disobeyed God and kept some of the spoil for himself burying it in the earth underneath his tent.

Think about how impossible it would have been for Joshua to locate Achan's hidden treasure buried under his tent among all the hundreds of thousands of tents. Without the intervention of God revealing the culprit Achan might not have ever been found and God's strength would have been separated from Israel. This illustrates how impossible it would be for us to identify and eliminate our own weaknesses without the Holy Spirit's help. Our decision to utilize the tools God has made available to us gives Him what He needs to locate and destroy our weaknesses.

The punishment for Achan and his family and all his possessions was death. (Joshua 7:25)

“...And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they stoned them with stones.”

What this speaks to is the fact that God expects us to refuse to allow one weakness to remain in our flesh. Whatever we allow to remain becomes our most vulnerable point, susceptible to the enemy's attack.

It leaves no doubt as to the seriousness in which God views the weaknesses hidden in our flesh. Each one of them represents the potential to separate us from our Father if allowed to remain. They not only affect us, but they could potentially affect the lives of our family as well. We must continue to give the Holy Ghost everything He needs to search out those weaknesses in us. Then we must cooperate with Him and do the things necessary to put each weakness to death.

The flesh is good at trying to convince us that a few weaknesses are okay. It uses the argument; “everyone else is this way” in an effort to get us into self-justification. Or, that God's not going to notice one or two little “character flaws”. The truth of the matter is that we must refuse to excuse anything, no matter how big or small, that the Holy Ghost through our new nature has accused. If we have a check inside, then we need to deal with it, period.

The account of Achan's disobedience reveals the dangers of hidden weaknesses in our flesh and how they give the enemy inroads into our life. In future letters, we will study how crafty the flesh can be as it tries to convince us to make peace. Finally, we will see the doors of entry the enemy utilizes to attack us in the event we mistakenly do make peace with our flesh in any area.

Praise God! So long as we continue to do the things that empower the Holy Ghost to affect change in our lives we will be victorious. By spending time in God's Word, either reading or listening, praying in other tongues, worship,

confessing His Word over us, and fasting, we are empowering the Holy Ghost to take aim on our weaknesses. In doing so, we will continue to take possession of more and more of our promised land.

~ Grace be with you

Mark Jenkins