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Don't Underestimate Your Enemy

Dear Friend,

WARNING: "Don't underestimate your enemy!" That's not to say that we should fear our enemy, because Jesus has already defeated him and sealed his fate forever. Neither should we allow ourselves to think that our enemy isn't interested in our utter destruction or at the very least, neutralization.

Paul made this statement in his second letter to the Corinthians. (II Corinthians 2:11)

"Lest satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."

In the context of the letter, Paul was referring to the necessity of the church to forgive a particular man so that a door of unforgiveness wouldn't be left open for the devil and his demons to gain access. Look closely at the words at the end of the verse and notice that they can be applied to any of satan's "**devices**".

He is saying that we are **not to be ignorant** and yet I believe many Christians are **woefully ignorant** when it comes to satan's devices. Too much of the church has the enemy pictured as someone dressed in a red suit and carrying a pitchfork. So long as there's no one knocking on the front door dressed in a red suit asking to come in we don't believe the enemy is within a 100 miles. That couldn't be further from the truth.

Let's take a look at what I believe to be the central focus of the enemy's attacks against the church and see if we can't shed some light on why God's glorious "bride" appears to be oblivious to satan's devices. It's time to stop underestimating our enemy and his tactics because it leaves us vulnerable and ill prepared for his advances.

The devil doesn't just walk up to a born again spirit filled believer and announce to them that he and all his demons are going to destroy them. No, his attacks

are more covert and illusive. Instead of a direct frontal assault, the enemy blindsides us without us realizing what has happened. Eventually, we can look back and see where he has effectively sidelined us before we recognized it was him.

That's right, satan's most effective tool is the fact that when he is launching an assault against us we generally don't recognize it's him. In other words, we aren't going to see the devil shooting actual fiery darts at us like an archer shooting arrows, and yet we have scripture that tells us that we are going to be assaulted with fiery darts. (Ephesians 6:16)

“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”

I don't know about you, but I don't recall ever stepping out onto my front porch and having to run back inside because satan had launched a fiery dart at me, so what form do these fiery darts take in our lives? You see, I believe on a daily basis we are being shot at by our enemy and all the while blaming something or someone else for the attack.

Instead of an actual flaming dart whizzing past our head and parting our hair, the form the devil's dart takes is often through the **words** and **actions** of our closest and most treasured loved ones. Generally speaking, they have no idea they are acting as a conduit for the enemy's influence in our lives.

Allow me to explain. The devil isn't approaching people and discussing ways he can use them to destroy us? Certainly not! These people may actually love us. So how does the enemy convince them to speak words that undermine our faith? This is a very good question and one that much of the body of Christ needs to understand.

The enemy operates through **anything** that is **not** of **faith**, which can have a very large scope. Think about all the times you are faced with a decision and instead of choosing faith you opted for the path of least resistance, generally because of some fear on your part. Anytime and every time we take the “fear” option we open ourselves up to the enemy in some way, shape or form. Likewise, when we are faced with a decision and our friends or family begin to urge us to choose the path of least resistance, the “safe” path, our choice of fear over faith opens the door to the enemy in our lives. Their fear-filled words are one form of fiery dart the enemy uses to try to take us out.

Here is a verse that you may have never considered and yet look at what God calls sin. (Romans 14:23)

“And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”

Notice the word “whatsoever”. That word is all encompassing. So, what is faith? Because when I choose anything other than the “faith” option, I’m in sin. Faith is taking God at His Word, accepting His Word as truth, and operating according to His Word no matter what the natural circumstances look like because we know His Word is His will for us. Remember, regardless of the circumstances, we are always going to have the option to choose between faith or doubt and unbelief.

So, let’s say you’re faced with a mountain of a problem and that little voice on the inside is encouraging you to take God at His Word and believe Him for the desired outcome. All the while, not one single person in your inner circle shares your convictions. Instead of supportive words of encouragement to stand on God’s Word, all you hear are statements that undermine your faith. Where do you think those statements originated? Certainly not from the mind of God! These fiery darts are from your enemy coming through the mouths of your friends.

In case you are still not convinced that the enemy likes to use those closest to you consider the fact that Judas was a member of Jesus’ inner circle. Another person in Jesus’s inner circle that the devil successfully used to shoot fiery darts at Jesus was Peter. Just after Peter’s glorious declaration that Jesus was in fact the Christ the Son of the living God, almost in the same breath, Peter began to contradict Jesus and say that Jesus would not have to go to the cross and die. Remember what Jesus said? (Matthew 16:23)

“But He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, satan: thou art and offense unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”

Notice that Jesus was looking at Peter and speaking to satan because the words that Peter said were contradictory to the will, plan and purpose of God and they originated in the mind of the enemy. Peter wasn’t momentarily possessed by the devil. He was simply being a conduit for the devil by speaking words of doubt and unbelief. These words were fiery darts being shot at Jesus by satan through Peter.

Another example is from the life of Job. (Job 2:7)

“So went satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote him with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.”

Keep in mind, these events took place prior to Jesus going to the cross and satan had not yet been defeated by Jesus so his ability to assault Job was based on the liberty he enjoyed before the cross. Look at the words of Job’s wife. (Job 2:9)

“Then said his wife unto him, Doest thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die.”

Talk about sleeping with the enemy. Here’s a person’s closest confidant telling him to curse God and die. This is one of the clearest examples of fiery darts coming out of a loved one’s mouth and piercing the heart of a man.

So how does the enemy so effectively use people’s words as weapons against us? He does so by working through their personal weaknesses. These weaknesses are areas in which a person is most vulnerable to the enemy’s suggestive thoughts. That being the case, the next time you encounter a friend or family member struggling in their stand of faith, you might think twice before offering up your “opinion” on the matter. If it is **not** based on God’s Word spoken in faith, you might just become satan’s mouth-piece in your friend’s life.

If we were soldiers fighting in a war against another country we would clearly recognize the enemy as the one shooting bullets at us, wearing different color uniforms and often speaking an entirely different language. We wouldn’t need any help recognizing who we were supposed to shoot. That kind of warfare is pretty clear-cut. One side squares off against the other and the last one standing is the victor.

As you look at the surrounding verses in Ephesians 6 you can see that we are most definitely in a war, although our enemy is a master of deception. You may never see him coming until he’s already there, right in the middle of your business, or perhaps after he has come and gone and your life is in shambles.

The kind of war we are fighting is against an enemy that we cannot see. So, no matter what we think, **our battle is not against flesh and blood people.** (Ephesians 6:12)

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

The reason it looks like our battle is against flesh and blood is because the devil doesn't manifest himself in the natural to directly assault us. What he and his underlings do is to utilize the weaknesses of those around, often closest to us, **who are not operating in faith** to try and shake us from our stand of faith. Look again at the sixteenth verse and notice the word **“all”**. Our choice to operate in faith instead of doubt and fear will quench, or stop, **all** the fiery darts the enemy launches at us. (Ephesians 6:16)

“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”

The best example I can think of in which a man withstood fiery darts sent directly from the devil with the shield of faith is the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. What we don't see in the biblical account of this incident is any record of satan shooting flaming darts of wood and iron at Jesus. If there was any time in history that satan would have loved to have shot actual darts at someone in this natural world don't you know it would have been then. What we can conclude by the events of the temptation is that “fiery darts” are not actual physical darts.

Then we must conclude that what we see transpiring between Jesus and satan is what actual warfare looks like and what is coming out of satan's mouth is in fact what Paul referred to as “fiery darts”. That being the case, the “fiery darts” are anything coming to us from the enemy via our thoughts or through the mouths of unsuspecting friends and loved ones that undermine our faith and tempt us to respond in doubt, fear, and unbelief.

In satan's bid to destroy Jesus his entire objective was to get Jesus to sin. Had Jesus responded in anything other than faith, **“it is written”**, Jesus would have fallen right into satan's trap. Another point that cannot be overlooked is the focal point of satan's attack, which was as to whether or not Jesus was **actually the Son of God**.

This is so important because for us today satan's attack has not changed. He desperately wants to lure Christians into questioning and doubting their place in the Body of Christ, the family of God, as God's sons. All of satan's attacks against us can be traced back to this one singular point, “if you are ‘a’ son of God”. So long as our sonship and authority in the Body of Christ remains a

question in our minds satan will be successful in shaking us in our belief of this truth and he has us right where he wants us.

We are in a battle against someone whose goal is to disable us either mentally, emotionally or physically and ultimately convince us we are defeated. Even though you may be making great strides in your relationship with the Lord, in an effort to slow you down the enemy might drop a suggestive thought in the mind of one of your closest friends or family members that you are getting into "pride". The reason this seems to be so effective is because the more a person knows they are a son of God the more confident they become in who they are. For those around them, what appears to be pride is actually confidence in God and in who He made us to be as sons of God in Christ.

The next thing you know you are being accused of being in spiritual pride because you say things like, "I am a son of God." "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." The enemy begins to feed your friends and family thoughts like; "Look at them, they think they are something." "I better warn them that they are getting in pride." All the while you are simply saying what the bible already declares about you in Christ Jesus.

So, how is it that the enemy is so successful dropping these lies in the minds of others around you, who have watched you and seen your commitment for years, and now they believe you are in pride? It is because the enemy is using their weaknesses and lack of understanding of who they are in Christ. You see, they don't know who they are as a son of God. Consequently, when they hear you making bold declarations of faith, their lack of faith in this area makes them the perfect candidates for the enemy to work through to attack you.

I will leave you with the words of Peter. (I Peter 4:12-13)

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. (13) But rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when His glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy."

We are to rejoice no matter the attack because we already have the victory in Christ, as sons of the living God. You see "His glory" according to John 1:14 was the glory of being the "only begotten of the Father" which is the glory of being The Son of God. We who are born again are also begotten of God as sons of God. His glory is in us because we are sons and this "revealing" is what Paul referred to when he said we go from glory to glory. (II Corinthians 3:18)

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

We who are born again are already sons of God. This changing, or transformation, is the “revealing” to our soul of who we have become in the new birth. This “revealing” is what the enemy must stop. He cannot afford to have a planet full of born again children of God **who know who they are** because this makes them unstoppable.

Don't underestimate your enemy! He wants to keep you from discovering who you are in Christ. He may use your closest loved ones to stop you, because he cannot afford to contend with you once you discover your true identity in Christ. You are already a giant slayer on the inside. It's time to let the giant slayer loose on this world and not be taken out by any fiery darts.

~ Jesus Loves You!

Mark Jenkins