

MARK JENKINS MINISTRIES

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Unguarded Thoughts

Dear Friend,

Throughout the ages, military leaders have studied their opponents in an effort to be prepared for their attacks, understand their tactics and try to exploit their weaknesses. Successful leaders study past battles fought by their adversaries in hopes of being able to predict their future movements. If they can determine their enemy's next move they can defeat them with the least amount of casualties and win the war.

As Christians living in a fallen world, we are surrounded by an enemy who is invisible to the natural eye and consequently we forget exists. The enemy is often very successful at taking advantage of oblivious believers even to the point of them blaming themselves, or worse blaming one another, for the attacks that are orchestrated by the devil.

At the risk of sounding like an ultra-militant Christian, obsessed with waging war against the enemy, allow me to acknowledge that yes we are in fact engaged in a constant battle, but the way we wage war against him is probably not the way you might expect. You see, far too many of us are being lulled into believing that we are somehow exempt from battle, or worse yet, have no idea of the fact that we are in conflict to begin with. Others have the mistaken idea that if we leave the devil alone he will leave us alone. To think that the enemy will leave you alone simply because you aren't bothering him is ridiculous.

The simple fact that the devil is out to destroy anyone and everyone he possibly can means we are all in his crosshairs. **The good news is that as children of the living God the battle has already been won in Jesus and we simply have to walk in our victory.**

"So, Mark, if Jesus has already won the battle and destroyed the devil, how is it that I as a believer have to deal with the attacks of the enemy?" That's a good question. The victory won by Jesus through His death, burial, and resurrection sealed the enemy's defeat forever and solidified our victory as we identify

ourselves in Jesus. Although, this doesn't mean we have become off limits to the forces of darkness, but it does mean that in every way possible Jesus has already delivered us out of the hands of the devil.

As hard as it might be to believe, the enemy doesn't have the right to just walk up to you and take your life. What he does have the right to do is to convince us to accept defeat by accepting his lies that he feeds us through our unguarded thoughts. If he can somehow convince us to accept defeat, especially by speaking it out of our mouth, he's got us. But, he generally doesn't begin by trying to hit us with a "take out punch". No, he starts by getting us to accept something that appears much more benign.

For example, the enemy's most insidious work can be seen in the area of physical sickness. Since we already live in a world that's infected with death, it **isn't** difficult to convince people that they are sick. His initial efforts might be small, but given the opportunity they will increase. It begins by convincing you to accept the thought that you're just getting old and sickness is to be expected. This is the first step in getting you clean off the planet in due time.

So, the first wave of attack could very easily come by a commercial on TV advertising a new wonder drug that treats a particular illness. I'm sure you're familiar with such a commercial and how they list all the possible symptoms and side effects. Now that you've heard the symptoms and the thought has been planted in your mind, the least little hint of one of those symptoms in your body sends most people to the doctor convinced they have the disease. Add to that the person's words talking about how sick they feel and the next thing you know that their body is riddled with disease and it all started as an unguarded thought allowed to take root.

Notice the process; a simple thought allowed to go unchallenged, accompanied by a corresponding symptom, can lead to all-out war for your life. These lingering thoughts become the breeding ground, which can eventually result in a life or death circumstance. Before a thought like this is allowed to take root in your mind cast it down. Confess that by the stripes of Jesus you were healed and you are healed now. If you're like me, it helps me to actually say, "I cast you down you tormenting thought I will not allow you to remain in my mind." This is how we can apply what Paul described in 2 Corinthians 10:4-5.

“(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) (5) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

At this point, some might say: *“Mark, what you are describing sounds like there are demons all around us tormenting us with these thoughts. So why don’t I see any of them?”* That is a good question and one that needs to be addressed from God’s word. If you are someone who only believes what you see with your natural eyes and doubts the existence of anything else, then we need to see from God’s word that there is a world of the spirit all around us that we cannot see.

Let’s look at one example in 2 Kings 6 in which Elisha and his servant were being threatened by the King of Syria. The Syrians were ready to attack Elisha and his servant and the servant was full of fear. Notice what Elisha told him. (2 Kings 6:16)

“And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.”

You can just imagine Elisha’s servant looking at Elisha and thinking; “Where?” They were the only two people that stood in opposition to the Syrians, or were they? (2 Kings 6:17)

“And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”

Maybe you are already aware of the fact that we are surrounded by the unseen world of the spirit, but rest assured if you are like most of us you forget it even exists. If we were able to see into that world I’m sure we would be shocked to discover all the help we have been given by the forces of darkness to think all kinds of horrible thoughts about ourselves, and not just thoughts about sickness and disease.

The enemy uses our thoughts to try to convince us of a host of things such as: what a failure we are, how no one likes us, lies about our spouse or kids, how we’ll never amount to anything, and how God can’t use us because we are such damaged goods. Believe me, the list could go on and on. Is it any wonder that the church of today appears to be so anemic, so lack luster and powerless. Sadly, so many of us spend so much time entertaining those thoughts of defeat that we have no time left to do what God told Joshua to do.” (Joshua 1:8)

“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according

to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”

God knew that in order to be successful in this world would require us to think only God thoughts and not the world’s thoughts. If you are looking at God’s word and speaking it out of your mouth day and night, then you are limiting the inroads the devil uses to corrupt your thinking. Look at what Paul told the Philippians. (Philippians 4:8)

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and there be any praise, think on these things.”

It only stands to reason that if you think only on “these things” you will have no time to meditate on the thoughts of the devil, who is only interested in your destruction. Jesus warned us of everything the devil is good at as is expressed in these three simple words; stealing, killing, and destroying. (John 10:10)

“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

The thief Jesus is referring to here is the devil. He is the merchant of death and strikes in any of the three ways listed: stealing, killing, and destroying. Jesus, on the other hand came to give us life more abundantly. This abundant life is available to every person. But, those unguarded thoughts sown like seeds in our minds by the enemy are what keeps us from living abundant life.

In closing, keep in mind that it isn’t God’s fault you are in the mess you are in. Unguarded thoughts left unchecked have most likely brought many of you to the place you are at today. Thank God you don’t have to stay there if you don’t want. All you have to do is uproot all that poisonous thinking of the enemy by replacing it with God’s word inside you. Before long your field will be wall to wall full of the life and purpose of God.

~ Jesus Loves You!

Mark Jenkins