

Practical spiritual warfare

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(All quotation are from the New King James bible)

Introduction

How did Jesus describe our adversary?

John 8:44 *'He was a murderer from the beginning.'*

John 10:10 *'The thief does not come except to kill and to steal and to destroy.'*

How did the apostle Peter understand our adversary?

1 Peter 5:8 *'Your adversary, the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.'* (literally, swallow up.)

How did Paul view our current position on earth?

Ephesians 6:12 *'Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.'*

Jesus – He cast out many evil spirits that were affecting people and teaches that we will do greater things than He did. John 14:12

Why didn't Jesus lock up the devil and throw away the key? Because we born again believers are here to fulfil part of God's eternal purpose.

1 John 4:4 *'Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.'*

Here is Paul, preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ and explaining God's eternal purpose: - *'to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ: to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.'* Ephesians 3:9-11

So, we the born again believers, known as the true church, are here to demonstrate God's wisdom to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. How do we do that?

Our adversary went wrong by disobedience, resulting in an evil, God hating and believer hating spiritual being called the devil and satan. Our obedience is a demonstration to him of his errors. Yet more is required. Jesus gives His followers authority over all the works of the devil - *'Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.'* Luke 10:19

We are urged to work out our own salvation (deliverance from danger) with fear and trembling for it is God who works in us for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:12) so that our whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of the Lord. (2 Thessalonians 5:23)

When we are born again our human spirit is transferred from death to life and infilled by the Holy Spirit. Our eternal destiny is now secured and guaranteed. But, whilst we are still on earth we have to work out the deliverance from danger of body and soul. This is where we demonstrate God's wisdom to principalities and powers.

As we, born again believers, go through life we are expected to become more and more confirmed to the image of Christ as the Holy Spirit changes us from one degree of glory to another. (2 Corinthians 3:18) Our adversary the devil will try to frustrate and delay that process, robbing, killing, destroying and devouring. We either suffer the devil's actions, all too often not realizing his hand but thinking things like loss and sickness just happen 'naturally,' or we indulge in what we call spiritual warfare.

This booklet is about practical spiritual warfare – things that I and my family have experienced in the normal run of life. These are problems which are common to all and especially to born again believers.

What we do is not by our strength but by grace. In the accounts that follow you will see God's grace time and again coming to our aid in times of need.

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Properly dressed for the battle

Before we look at various practical examples there are some things to consider:

Spiritual power. The issue is spiritual not physical - therefore we need spiritual power. Physical strength will not avail.

The gift of the Father. When the risen Jesus appeared to His disciples and immediately before He was taken up into heaven, He said this to them: *'Behold I send the promise of the Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.'*
Luke 24:49

Endued with power. The word endued has the meaning of being clothed with – like the putting on of a garment. For the disciples this is recorded in Acts 2:1-4. The disciples had received the indwelling Spirit in John 20:21. After a 10 day gap the Spirit came upon them, appearing like tongues of fire and they spoke with other tongues.

Note the two requirements for spiritual warfare:

- 1 Born again believers receive the indwelling Holy Spirit the moment they place their trust in Jesus. Not born again, then not suitable for spiritual warfare!

- 2 Usually, but not exclusively, some time later the gift of the Father can come upon us, usually with speaking in tongues, but not exclusively. Not baptized with the Spirit, then no power for spiritual warfare!

The essential of truth

Paul gives specific guidance in Ephesians 6:

- a) Recognise your enemies are not flesh and blood – this is spiritual warfare.
- b) Be strong in the Lord in the power of His might.
- c) Stand and keep standing.
- d) Be properly dressed - put on the whole armour:
 - i) Truth
 - ii) Righteousness
 - iii) Walk in the preparation of the gospel of peace - the gospel, that is the full gospel, which has all the truth necessary for life and godliness. Let this make you ready for your journey through life.
 - iv) Carry the shield of faith
 - v) Wear hope (the certainty of future blessing) – as the helmet of salvation.
 - vi) Take the sword of the Spirit – which is God speaking to you.

More later.

Ready or not we all face spiritual opposition. If we deny it we loose and blame other causes.

Be humble

It is essential to know that it is all about Jesus and the victory He has won on the cross. We have no power of our own – when we are baptized with Spirit we receive power, this is the promise of the Father, it is God's power which He graciously channels through us by faith. (Faith comes by hearing every word that is proceeding from the mouth of the Father. Matthew 4:4)

What follows are some of the experiences of our family and how the Lord delivered us from them all.

All glory to the Lord.

Chapter 1

Here we go again – depression

Depression is horrible. It is a heavy and dark place. It is not God's plan for us. Jesus came and spoke the truth whilst He was in the world, then He rose and went to the Father - *'But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.'* John 17:13

The family was on holiday in Cornwall, no problems, no stress, just going to be a lovely family time. (Me, my wife Marion, and three children Simon, Corinne and Kerry).

From time to time Marion suffered from depression. It was irrational and had no basis to exist. But from time to time it seriously affected her.

Here we are on holiday and out of nowhere a depression arrives. This cannot be right! This is to be a family holiday time - a good and pleasant time free from all the usual 'troubles' of the daily round. A time of pleasure and relaxation. This depression was going to rob Marion and the family of this precious time together.

So - I am on my knees beside the bed, I have my bible with me. 'Father this cannot be right.' I am calling on my heavenly Father. 'This isn't right please show me what to do.' Immediately a bible reference comes to mind. I look it up - the verse states plainly that there is a spirit of terror at work.

As it so happened I had just read a book dealing with evil spirits ('Deliver us from evil' by Don Basham.) I had no experience of deliverance ministry but having read the book I knew the theory of dealing with evil spirits. And here was the Lord God telling me plainly that an evil spirit was involved.

What to do? We were 250 miles away from home with no Christian connections in Cornwall at that time. There was nothing for it but to put into practice what I had learned.

So I explained to Marion that I had prayed and that God had, through the bible, shown me what the problem was. It was time to act. In the name of Jesus I commanded the spirit to leave, by speaking out loud in as strong a voice as I could muster. We both 'saw' the spirit leave and circle round the room like a wind. Marion was free.

After this, on our return from holiday, we sought some counsel from a bible teacher we knew. With his sound advice* Marion quickly learnt how to stand in the freedom she had received. Depression had been a problem which affected her from time to time. Since her deliverance she has been completely free from depression – all praise and glory to our wonderful Saviour.

*Learning to stand – Jesus warned that when an evil spirit is cast out it will seek to return. So Marion was experiencing what can only be described as this evil spirit 'knocking on the door wanting to return.'

She learned to utterly resist – that is to keep the door locked and bolted and to refuse entry. After a little while all attempts to re-enter ceased.

To complete the account – when the spirit of terror was cast out of Marion it went straight into Kerry, our youngest. Because we were very much learning as we went we pondered what to do. I fasted for three days and then cast the spirit out of Kerry – it never returned.

From living, always fearful of the inevitably coming depression, Marion has been completely set wonderfully free. The enemies attempt to rob Marion and to devastate our family life was defeated.

Practical spiritual warfare:

This experience relied on a number of factors:

- A Understanding that there are evil spirits at work today.
- B Knowing that there was an evil spirit at work – here by revelation through a bible reference given to me by word of knowledge.
- C Knowing just the fundamental – the greatest of all power belongs to Jesus who gives us the authority over all the works of the enemy.
- D Commanding the evil spirit to go in Jesus name.

How do evil spirits gain an entrance into human beings?

We are aware of a number of ways, though this may not be an exhaustive list:

- 1 Through the family line - that is passed down through one's predecessors.
- 2 Through unwise actions - i.e. watching horror films, taking drugs, over indulgence in alcohol and food are likely to give entrance to evil spirits.
- 3 Through wrong thinking - allowing thoughts which are contrary to the truth and the nature of the Lord - i.e. contemplating sinful actions.
- 4 Any and all occult activity.
- 5 Through wrong confession - that is speaking out wrong and negative things about oneself and family. i.e. I expect I will get sick, or I expect to loose etc.
- 6 Through wrong doctrine - that is believing something wrong. i.e. believing that the Lord is just waiting to pounce the moment you put a foot wrong will develop a wrong understanding of the Lord and can lead to fear.
- 7 Unforgiveness. We are specifically warned that unforgiveness leads to a bitter root developing, causing great damage.
- 8 Through accidents. (especially a spirit of fear)

These are risk factors which can open the door to evil spirits, not automatic entry points. The more one indulges in any of the above the wider the door opens.

The best antidote is in these frequent prayers -

‘Holy Spirit fill me with more and more love for Jesus.’

And, ‘Holy Spirit fill me with truth, more and more understanding of the truth.’

The more we love the Lord and the more we understand of Him and of the truth the safer and stronger we become in the faith.

Chapter 2

About to be robbed.

We lived in a village in Sussex in a large Victorian dower house. Across the yard from the house was a stable which I had converted into my office.

One morning, as I crossed the yard to the office I heard the Lord speak to me – ‘satan is going to try to rob you of part of your business.’

After the warning from the Lord I immediately took authority over the works of satan – speaking out loud, ‘In Jesus name satan I command you not to rob me of any part of my business.’

I ran an accountancy practice. Before that I ran a plastic moulding factory and though I had left that far behind I had one ‘historic’ product the manufacture of which I still arranged for one customer. It was, what in English slang, we would call ‘a nice little earner.’

My ‘customer’ was a sharp businessman - a real entrepreneur and known for being astute. About mid morning he phoned and told me he found he could get this product 16% cheaper. (That was exactly my margin.) I had dealt with him for many years and would have expected him to drive a very hard bargain.

But, on this occasion I knew there was another spiritual power behind this event.

So I merely told him he was welcome to go elsewhere if he so wished or equally welcome to continue to buy through me but only on the existing terms.

The power behind him, though he had no knowledge of it, had been broken and he continued to buy through me for a number of years until eventually he sold the business.

The enemies attempt to rob failed.

Practical spiritual warfare:

- A Again receiving a word of knowledge played a vital role.
- B Taking authority over the enemies works by verbal expression - like issuing a command.
- C Resting on that completed work and letting the event take its course.

Chapter 3

Interference with university education

Kerry was at university in Southampton. She was coming up towards her finals in a few months time. Kerry phoned us – she was experiencing debilitating migraine headaches. We called her home.

As we, Marion and myself, prayed with her Marion received what is known as a word of knowledge. 'Give her garlic capsules.' This was duly arranged and the headaches stopped. Kerry went back to Southampton – which was about 60 miles from home.

After a couple of days she was back on the phone, the headaches had returned and were as bad as ever. We told her to stay put – we would pray and seek the Lord.

Now we received another word of knowledge. It described the fact that her ground floor student accommodation was divided from a family, who were devout followers of Islam, by the adjoining wall. (Something we did not know.) This family were praying towards Mecca every day and this was affecting Kerry.

We took authority over the effects of these prayers commanding them to cease from affecting Kerry in Jesus name. Straight away the effects stopped and Kerry was completely free of headaches - she went on to graduate and to qualify as a teacher.

The enemies attempt to seriously affect Kerry's education and her future was defeated.

Practical spiritual warfare:

- A As in the previous examples the words of knowledge equipped us to overcome the problem.
- B Although taking garlic capsules seemed to be an odd thing to do obedience was necessary. It is always the case that our obedience to the Lord's instructions is essential. See the introduction - satan's disobedience led to his fall. God's eternal purpose is that we, the church, demonstrate God's manifold wisdom to the principalities and powers. Obedience to the Lord is paramount.
- C Distance is not a problem when dealing in the spiritual realm. Although Kerry and the Islamic family were 60 miles away our authority over the works of the enemy was effective.
(for example see John 4:46-54 and Matthew 15:21-28)

Chapter 4

Got sick.

Rather following on from the last example our other daughter, Corinne, was attacked during her training as a nurse.

(Perhaps we should take note that the enemy will target our children and grand children.)

Her training was at Central Middlesex Hospital in London. She was sent home with glandular fever. This is a disease which takes around 6 weeks or more to clear so she was signed off for 6 weeks. It also leaves traces in the bloodstream.

Corinne, Marion and myself gather in our kitchen and pray. 'Father, you know all about this. We know sickness does not come from you. What are we to do about it.' As before, the word of knowledge came from the Lord. 'Take authority over this disease in My name.'

Speaking out loud I took authority over glandular fever in Jesus name, commanding it to go. That same day Corinne started to feel better.

The next day we gathered in the kitchen again. 'Father this is wonderful Corinne is about 50% better. Is there anything else we should do? 'Anoint her with oil,' was the reply. We duly got the olive oil from the cupboard and in the name of Jesus anointed her with oil. She was immediately completely better.

Next step was to phone the hospital and explain that Corinne had been healed and could come back to work. However, the hospital explained that, ironically, they do not believe in healing. Corinne had the six weeks off, fully paid.

We were concerned that this gap may affect her qualifying so we prayed that this would not be the case. She duly qualified on time.

[On returning to hospital she was given a blood test – all traces of glandular fever had gone.]

The enemies attempt to disrupt the training of Corinne was defeated with no bad side effects or consequences.

Practical spiritual warfare:

- A Praying and seeking the Lord together with certainty that He is the answer not the problem and that He hears us was the starting point.
- B As before obeying the words of knowledge was required.
- C Although to the natural mind speaking to a disease and commanding it to go seems like foolishness, nevertheless it is one way of effective spiritual power.
- D We recognized our Father has all power and that sometimes He may require us to apply His power in more than one go. (See Mark 8:24)

Chapter 5

Pet protection - the dog gets the crumbs.

The Old Covenant included the blessing of livestock. (See Deuteronomy 28) Our young retriever puppy of nine months was diagnosed with severe hip dysplasia and manifesting signs of difficulty in standing and walking.

The vet advised and gave a steroid injection but warned that any effect would be temporary. At very best we could expect the dog to live for about 6 or 7 years with increasing problems in standing and walking.

When the Lord God created the animals He created perfectly. After the fall of man, and over the many years since, the effects of sin in the natural world has increased – added to by the presence of hordes of wickedness that seek to rob, kill and destroy. The result is what we see around us - a natural world in which there are many examples of less than and far less than perfect creation.

However we turned to the Lord in prayer. We prayed for the healing of our puppies severe hip dysplasia on the basis that God is good and that the dogs get the crumbs.

Findus, the dog, lived to be 14, a good age for a retriever, and suffered no effects from the hip dysplasia - he was very clearly healed, living a full life.

Practical spiritual warfare:

Sometimes one has to follow particular instructions from the Lord. Sometimes we have to contend for the blessing.

On this particular occasion we prayed – that was all.

But the next experience was quite different –

Chapter 6

Talking sense to a horse

Our daughter Kerry had a horse named Topsy. Kerry loved looking after her and riding her.

Sometimes Topsy was a little difficult to catch when it was time to go for a ride. On this occasion Kerry came to the office ‘ ‘Dad, I can’t catch Topsy.’ The usual bribery with treats had failed. Dad, of course, is expected to have all the answers.

The paddock is at the back of the house about 75 yards from the office. As I walk I pray – ‘Lord, Help.’ The word of the Lord comes to me immediately, ‘Topsy has a wild spirit.’

So now I know this is a case for deliverance, for casting out this wild spirit. This is a first for me so far as animals are concerned.

I climb over the paddock fence and start to address the wild spirit in the name of Jesus, commanding it to leave. I did not expect what happened next. Topsy decided to identify as if she were a bull and charge at me. Then turning back and charging again. I decided to get back over the fence!

However I continued, from the safety of the other side of the fence, to command this evil spirit to leave. Topsy charged wildly about, but after a couple of minutes she stopped and let out the most enormous yawn that seemed to go on a long time.

Then she calmly walked up to me – she was never a problem when it came to riding time again.

Topsy was a changed horse – she was free from the wild spirit and continued to be a delight for her young owner.

Practical spiritual warfare:

- A I was learning that the Lord always has the answers to life's problems and that His love, His grace and His mercy, for us His beings created in His image, He will help in times of need. (See Hebrews 4:16)
- B The word of knowledge is a powerful tool.
- C The hosts of wickedness which are our enemies can also try to affect us through pets and animals.
- D The power of God is just as effective with animals as we follow His instructions.

Chapter 7

Got a bad report - failed

After qualifying as a state registered nurse Corinne went on to specialize in an area of mental health. This involved further training over various modules including placements with practitioners.

Her final placement was with a district nurse, accompanying her on her duties with the public. When the district nurse made her report to Corinne's supervisor she failed her.

Corinne told us she had failed this last module - we were surprised. Indeed we discerned that something was wrong so we set to praying that the Lord would bring any correction necessary.

Corinne's supervisor was very surprised by the failure as she had sailed through all the previous placements.

After a few days she called Corinne to her office.

Corinne could not explain it in any way. There had been no personality clash and nothing out of place. So the supervisor decided to call the district nurse, with Corinne still in the room, in order to get some understanding of why she had failed.

The district nurse broke down on the phone saying, 'I failed her because had I passed her she would have become more qualified than me.' The position was quickly corrected and Corinne passed - she was now both a state registered nurse and a qualified mental health nurse specializing in learning disabilities.

Practical spiritual warfare:

- A In this experience we see that evil can be worked through other people.
- B On this occasion the gift of discernment alerted us to the problem.
- C This time all it required was the request to the Father to bring correction to the situation. (Had we received further instructions we would have done what was required.)

Chapter 8

Taken to court

My professional life before retirement was as a practicing Chartered Accountant with my own practice. I served a number of small businesses and saw some grow to become more substantial.

One such business was a carpet warehouse. My small firm did all the book-keeping for this business which grew quickly.

It was expanding the number of branches a bit more quickly than was wise - then there was a significant downturn in the property market. House sales plummeted and that led to big reductions in carpet, and by then bed, sales.

Cash flow was seriously affected and the bank were getting edgy. My firm was dismissed and a large firm appointed. After two years the business completely failed. The new accountants said the owner 'raped' the business in this period. (That is was extravagant and drew out large sums of money.)

When things go wrong - blame the accountants. So even though two years had gone by and I had no input the owner took me to court.

This legal action was immoral and totally wrong - but courts are part of the world system and I knew one could not trust them to give justice. So this was time for prayer before the Lord seeking justification and protection. As had become normal for us we bound the enemy from interfering in the situation, prayed and let things take their course.

We gathered some Christian friends for the day Fixed for the court hearing. Our prayers were clearly effective! The other side did not turn up to the hearing so judgement was found in my favour, with costs. Awarded.

A bit latter the other side applied to the court for leave to bring the action again. This was refused whilst the costs remained unpaid. The costs were never paid. We latter heard that the offices of the solicitor for the other side suffered a fire and there was no further action.

Practical spiritual warfare

- A For us this was a practical lesson in not relying on the world system.
- B It was also a lesson in praying, in this case stating our case to the Lord, and then leaving it in His hands. (Had He told us to take any further action we would have done so.)
- C It was also a lesson in the power of praying together.
- D We experienced Philippians 4:6-7 'Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication make your requests be known to God; and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.'

Chapter 9

Deal with that evil spirit

Over the years we have had some people come to us for advice and ministry. Today, to a large extent, it is not recognized that there are evil spirits and that they can affect Christians. Paul calls them hosts of wickedness, at large, affecting the born again believers he was writing to. So when people came to us we had first to discern – is this problem natural or spiritual, or even both?

The Holy Spirit gives the gift of discernment to guide us in the process of working through life and in helping others. The Lord God is amazingly gracious. The Lord has led Marion and I to work together and has increased the gift of discernment, particularly in Marion – though we both expect the Lord to show us what He wants us to know.

Discernment can come in different ways. For Marion it often comes in pictures. For me it often comes in words or signs - that is physical signs, and in bad smells.

Once an evil spirit is discerned it is necessary to explain the situation to the person in need - though sometimes we may do that right at the beginning. Many folk are nervous or afraid or even horrified at the thought that an evil spirit could be involved – so counselling is required so that agreement to proceed can be obtained. (We have never tried to expel a demon or evil spirit without agreement.)

We found it helpful to liken the removal of an evil spirit to a trip to the dentist. You don't want to go - but it is the only way to get rid of that bad aching tooth!

This is not a handbook on deliverance and I don't feel qualified to write one. What is being highlighted is that we need discernment rather than just assuming problems are natural.

Intractable physical problems are often given special names and called 'medical.' People are fed pills and drugs which are useless against evil spirits. This is why it is so important to know from the Lord how to go forward. We have experienced Him saying take the medical route for a problem. We have also experienced Him saying take the spiritual route of deliverance. On occasion both have had to be followed, the spiritual route disarming the enemy and the practical route mopping up any remaining symptoms.

The point is if we don't ask we have only the medical route to rely on and it is useless in so many cases - often just reducing people to a drug induced state.

Our experience is that when ask and the Lord answers then we have the authority to proceed. We cover ourselves and our loved ones with the protection of the blood of Jesus and proceed, knowing that the whole power of heaven is available to those who believe.

What we have done is to take authority over the evil spirits in the name of Jesus commanding them to leave. That has proved to be very effective. But

Chapter 10

Persistence

We have learned both from the scripture and from our experience that persistence is frequently required. The deliverance may take a minute or two or in some cases quite a bit longer.

The doctrine is found in Luke 18 where we read the parable of the persistent widow. We find her demanding her rights from the unrighteous judge. Note - this unrighteous judge cares not for God or man and so represents the devil or his minions.

The effect of her demands puts pressure on him but at first he refuses. She persists and eventually the unrighteous one gives in saying literally in the Greek, 'she is beating me black and blue!'

We know the widow is also calling on the Lord at the same time as demanding her rights from the unrighteous judge - he tells us that in verse 7.

Persistence where no evil spirit is present.

In every situation we always take authority over the enemy binding him from interfering or adding his power to a natural problem.

So we have found with 'natural' problems, whether that be sickness or pressure from unwanted sources or problems of provision or whatever, that persistence may be required. It is also our experience that sometimes the Lord just answers straight away.

We have found it helpful to come before the Lord in the following way:

First with acknowledging His supreme might and power and His grace towards us.

Then bringing our request before Him and asking whether there is anything we should be doing, as in chapter 4 for example.

(Here it is worth noting how we receive a word from the Lord:

It can be that small voice in our mind that comes immediately after we ask - that is the voice that comes before the louder following voice denying it could be the Lord - that is the enemy trying to prevent us from receiving.

Sometimes it is a bible reference which we then look up to see what the Lord is saying as in chapter 1.

Sometimes it is a picture.

Sometimes there is no immediate answer and we leave the matter before the throne of grace

The Lord will speak to each of us in the way He chooses and we are aware He is not restricted - it is up to each of us to learn to recognize Him.)

Then we will do whatever He has said to do when He has spoken and thank Him profusely!

Where the Lord is silent we still thank Him for His grace and mercy and asking Him for His wisdom we wait leaving the matter with Him.

Though we will bring the matter to Him again and again until we receive the answer or understand that something is amiss. See James 1:6 and 4:1-3

Chapter 11

Little things

It is easy to think our problems are too small and to think we shouldn't trouble the Lord with them. We should understand that us taking authority over the works of the enemy is not troubling the Lord at all - indeed the opposite. See the Introduction and the reference to Ephesians 3. We should also understand God's love extends over little things in the natural realm.

Perhaps an example:

We had our bedroom redecorated. The decorator was a friend, a Christian brother and a client - also a very competent workman.

On this occasion there was a problem - when he had finished papering the room there were bubbles everywhere - not just a few. Bob, our decorator, said don't worry the bubbles will go down in a day or two. A couple of weeks later our walls were still very bubbled and we had a problem.

I was all for calling Bob back and getting him to strip it off and do it again. But Marion wanted time to pray. A little problem like bubbly wallpaper - would the Lord be interested? Would He answer regarding such a trivial thing?

She felt the Lord tell her to go round the room and just lay hands on each wall which she did - every bubble, every bubble disappeared. This small thing is probably the most unusual miracle we have witnessed.

We should also be aware that the Lord came to give us life more abundantly and that His love for us knows no limitations.

In Song of Solomon (2:15) the scripture talks of the little foxes that spoil the vines – *‘Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.’* Our enemy can and does use little things (like little foxes!) to wear us down. That is not to say that every little problem comes from him – but we should be aware of the potential.

We had an example a number of year ago. In a 12 month period we had about a dozen car windscreens break - including a back one! It was very tedious. Eventually (we were slow!) we realized this was not natural and brought the matter to prayer - it stopped.

He invites us to come before Him when we have a need - that is clearly stated in Hebrews 4:16 with no restrictions, no statement ‘don’t bother Me with small things.’ From the testimonies we hear many have experienced God’s provision in small things whether that has come by request in prayer or by exercising authority over the works of the enemy.

Chapter 12

Being ready, using the tools the Lord provides

This chapter is split into two – first being ready:

Here we have to mention a very important doctrinal issue which is mis-understood.

When there is a problem we often hear people say – ‘God is trying to teach me something or God is testing me.’

The scripture explicitly states that God does not test or tempt His children - ‘let no one say when he is tested or tempted, “I am tested or tempted by God.”’ Yet we often hear it said. (James 1:13)

Look Jesus was tested and tempted by the devil. Paul’s thorn was a messenger from Satan. It is our enemy who will test or faith and tempt us. (In the Greek the word ‘peirasmós’ has the meaning tempt and test.)

Then we hear people say ‘God has allowed it,’ as if He has carefully weighed it and decided to allow it – this makes Him an accessory and is as good as saying He sent the problem. It is also a complete mis-understanding of the difference between the Old and the New Covenant.

(In the Old Covenant the Lord protected His people from the works of the enemy – see Job whose protection was reduced when Satan challenged God. In the New Covenant it is not God’s purpose to protect us from the wiles of the devil as Paul made clear to the Ephesians – instead He puts His Holy Spirit in us so that ‘He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world.’

1 John 4:4

Then He says, 'Resist the devil and he will flee.'
As we saw in Ephesians 3, quoted in the introduction, this is part of God's eternal purpose – that we, the believing church, demonstrate God's manifold wisdom to the principalities and powers in the heavenly realm.)

Another misunderstanding we hear is that some think troubles, whether sickness or lack of provision or whatever, are there so that we share the sufferings of Christ. To these we ask:

When was Jesus sick? When was Jesus short of any provision? When did Jesus have any trouble He was not able to master?

The sufferings of Christ are made up of three things:
He was tested/tempted by the devil.

He was persecuted by world authorities (Pharisees etc) and people.

He had to deny Himself right up to the laying down His life at Calvary.

It is true to say that we share the sufferings of Christ under these three headings above – we too are got at by the devil, persecuted by unbelievers and expected to lay down our own desires for the benefit of the body of believers.

Peter makes it clear in 1 Peter 4:12-19 – there will be fiery trials – suffering as a Christian from being reviled by others! But do not suffer from your own actions such as being a thief or evildoer.

Being sick or lacking provision is not sharing the sufferings of Christ.

Never say God has sent me this problem and never say God has specifically allowed it to test me, for if you do you have no other option than to put up with it! – For who would dare try to undo or to resist something God was doing!

If you think God has told you He has sent or allowed the problem or the sickness then I suggest you have heard the wrong voice.

In fact the scripture makes it very clear – *‘every good and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.’* James 1:17

That is NO variation from good and perfect.

Now we have to consider another vital factor:

Understand this – when the Lord says, *‘He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world,’* and *‘resist the devil and he will flee from you’* (1 John 4:4 and James 4:7) and *‘I give you authority over all the works of the enemy’* (Luke 10:19) He means what He says. We may not feel that we have authority or power but we do.

We have to believe that God exists and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. – See Hebrews 11:6 and note the examples of Old Testament saints who reaped a reward through faith, though they were not perfect.

Come to the throne of grace to find help in a time of need. Come don’t hold back! Don’t throw away your confidence it has a great reward. (Hebrews 10:35)

Now using the tools the Lord provides.

Maybe you lack the confidence we just spoke about, so here are some 'tools' to build up that confidence: We have found the following very helpful:

Meditation on relevant scriptures.

That entails what one might call 'chewing the cud.' We take up a comfortable position - in a Psalm of David he mentions '*meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still*' (Psalm 4:4) David takes up a comfortable place! We 'chew the cud' by repeating the chosen scripture over and over, out loud, many times. We may stay on the same scripture for a number of days. After a while the scripture becomes an absolute certainty to us - no doubts. Some may say we have brain washed ourselves - in a way, yes - our thinking needed and needs to be aligned with the eternal truth of the word of God.

Proclamation

We have discovered that proclaiming the scripture, again out loud, has the effect of strengthening us. It is thus effective at any time we feel under pressure or in any weakness or doubt.

Tongues

The scripture tells us that speaking in tongues edifies us, or builds us up. (1 Corinthians 14:4)

Praise and worship

Choosing to praise, particularly in difficult times lifts us up and prevents heaviness trying to overcome us. (Isaiah 61:3)

'Wearing' the armour the Lord provides.

It is equally essential to be dressed for war!

The key passage is Ephesians 6:10-17 where Paul lists the armour we should be wearing. This is a descriptive way of explaining the attitudes we should have and live by all the time – not just special occasions!

The belt of truth

In this day and age biblical truth is under great attack. Even among born again Christians there is much misunderstanding and wrong doctrine. It is very important, for if we are believing the wrong thing it is an open door to the enemy and he can then create strongholds in our minds.

One obvious example is that those who say demons and evil spirits do not exist today, or cannot bother Christians today, are both clearly wrong and then have no defence against them.

Clearly dividing between the old and the new covenants is also vitally important. There are significant differences. In the old covenant the Lord protected His people from the works of the enemy, in the new He empowers us with authority over all the works of the enemy and expects us to exercise it.

This is why I have adopted the prayer, 'Holy Spirit please lead me into all truth,' as a very regular request.

The breastplate of righteousness.

Now a born again believer is not a miserable sinner!

True, once we all were, but at the point of new birth all things were made new, and the gift of righteousness was imparted to each of us.

We are now the beloved sons and daughters of the Lord God Himself who has become our 'Abba Father.' We don't resist the enemy as miserable sinners, we stand as the righteous children of God.

Feet shod with the gospel of peace.

This is a reference to the way we walk through life. Our walk must match our talk! Engaging in unrighteous activities opens the door to the enemy. We all make mistakes as we go through life. The example of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples shows exactly that. Our 'feet' need washing because picking up dirt on the road is inevitable 1 John 1:9 is the key scripture for maintaining clean feet - *'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'*

A key approach - don't do anything in life that you couldn't do if Jesus was watching your every move over your shoulder.

The shield of faith

To understand this we need to know that the word 'faith' really has two meanings in English. It means trust and should, most of the time, be translated as such. It also means faith as in faith that will move mountains.

Trust is increased the more we study and understand the scripture and the more we develop a close relationship with the Lord

Faith we will see in a minute.

Here we are to know and to count the Lord as entirely trustworthy and definitely for us and not against us – thus holding up the shield of faith –having trust in the Lord.

The helmet of salvation

This is all about the protection of the mind.

What we think is vitally important. Wrong thinking is an open door to the enemy.

See Romans 12:3 – here Paul is making it clear that we need to think straight. *‘Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.’*

See 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 – here Paul describes the warfare we experience in this life. *‘For though we walk in the flesh (normal human life), we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for the pulling down of strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing **every thought** into captivity to the obedience of Christ.’*

The bible is the plumb line for our doctrine. Not science, not medical opinion, not what teachers say, not anything that is contrary to scripture, rightly divided. Hence the frequent prayer, ‘Holy Spirit please lead me into all truth.’

If we deviate from the plumb line we open ourselves to the risk of adverse consequences, to wrong doctrine, leading to wrong actions, and possibly to the influence of evil spirits.

The sword of the Spirit which is the word (rhema) of God - faith.

The sword is the spoken word of God – that word He speaks to us. This rhema, this spoken word, is the way that faith of the mountain moving variety comes to us, as stated in Romans 10:17.

‘So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word (rhema) of God.’

It is worth noting that the word here for sword (*machaira*) is dagger, knife or short sword rather than the sharp two edged sword (*romphaia*) found proceeding from Jesus mouth in Revelation 1 - which is a sabre, a long and broad sword.

From this we see that the rhema is designed for in-fighting – for putting in the decisive thrust to defeat the enemy. The word of knowledge is the sword of the Spirit.

The way of peace

We are always aware that the peace of God should be the ruler, the arbiter, the umpire in our hearts concerning our actions, as per Colossians 3:15. This peace is in our hearts rather than in our minds. It is normal for questions, doubts, turmoil to try to invade at the mental realm.

In our hearts means deep down in the place from which the springs of living water flow - our innermost being. So we look to our gut level - do we have peace or do we lack peace deep down. Lack of peace can feel like a disturbed gut or stomach. Our rule should be, no peace no do -which rule we apply to all life's decisions and actions. When we lack this deep peace it is time to consult the Lord for further instructions and insight.

Now we are in a position to look at the practical application of tools in warfare.

The word of knowledge:

In the testimonies quoted previously the word of knowledge featured a lot. How do we receive a word of knowledge? Each individual will have different experiences - so what follows is limited to my experience and is not intended to eliminate other methods God may choose to communicate.

I ask and make my request known to God. In a ministry situation and at other times of prayer, there is frequently an immediate response, recognized in my mind. This is the Lord. Very often there can be a louder voice following quickly - either from our flesh or from the enemy saying things like, 'don't be silly God won't speak to you.' (Or similar things to get us to doubt and waver.)

My experience, as seen in the testimonies, is that when I follow that first voice there is a good result.

Sometimes the word of knowledge comes another way. Maybe my request has been made or maybe a word just comes anyway.

A specific word from scripture, highlighted as one reads it, is a common way for the Lord to speak. This is not just thinking up a scripture. This is the Spirit quickening a word and we recognize it by the Spirit giving witness to it in our own human spirit – that is the deep inner level.

The importance of the word of knowledge is that it carries God's intent and therefore God's power. Jesus did what He saw His Father doing and when we receive a word of knowledge it is telling us what the Lord will do. So we obey and apply the word of knowledge – it has never failed. (In chapters 3 and 4 we needed two words of knowledge to complete God's deliverance for us.)

Jesus also acted with authority –

The application of authority over the works of the enemy.

Jesus gave His followers authority over all the works of the enemy (Luke 10:19) That same authority is now resident within born again believers in the person of the Holy Spirit. (*'He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.'* (1 John 4:4)

We should know therefore that we have authority over all the works of the enemy and use that authority within our own domain and outside that domain as led by the Spirit.

What do I mean by 'domain.'

For example a husband is instructed to look after his wife. That involves washing her with the water of the 'rhema' word (Ephesians 5:26) and not permitting the enemy to work against her in any way.

So, if I discern, and I have in past days, that an evil spirit is troubling my wife, or that the enemy is getting at her in any way, I will take authority and drive it out and refuse all enemy oppression. It is not allowed in my domain – which includes my family.

As the Lord leads us our domain extends to any area He indicates. In the area in which we live for example we have been led to dismiss evil influence – such as shops selling occult products, and public occult performances.

As a pre-emptive measure we command the enemy not to affect us or our children or grand children on a daily basis. I do not claim that this is 100% effective all the time - but see chapter 10 regarding persistence. Nevertheless it is certainly very helpful.

Anointing with oil

The scripture gives us instruction about anointing with oil. We were once specifically told to do this – see chapter 4. (We do not do it except when instructed.)

It seems the scripture also makes room for those who are struggling to know what to do: *'Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church. Let them pray over him , anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him.'* (James 5:14-15)

We note the scripture talks of the prayer of faith and we know that faith comes by hearing. So it is usual for the elders, or one of them, to receive something from the Lord, by word of knowledge, to assist the one being prayed for.

The last word –

When he wrote to the Ephesians some think Paul should have stopped at 'we do not wrestle,' and left it at that, rather than going to describe our enemies and give practical advice. This attitude is quite wrong and may be because of fear or wrong doctrine.

Throughout history the believing church has been seen as the army of the Lord.

What good is an army that does not or will not fight?

For consideration – Am I taking my place in the army of the Lord, playing my part in demonstrating God's wisdom to the principalities and powers?

Notes.

Other titles:

The ICCC – Transformed Working Life series:

Inherent Power

Work is a 1st class calling

No one can serve two masters

Hope - the certainty of future blessing

Faith or presumption

Hearing God speak

Working from rest

Renewing the mind

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