

## When Weird Things Happen

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 ESV

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Anytime we stand on the Word of God and declare it over our life, we will experience resistance and assault from the enemy of our souls. There is more than just what we see here right now. In fact, there is a swirl of activity going on in another realm - a spiritual realm - that's happening right now. There are intrusive thoughts, pictures, and feelings happening to each one of us that may not always be "*us*", because there's a very real opponent lining up on the other side.

When that happens, we need to be ready and know what to do to vanquish the enemy that's coming against us. Sometimes, when weird things happen to us - things we can't necessarily put our finger on, but we know "something" is up - we wonder, "*Why is weird stuff happening now?*" As dramatic things are happening in our government, there's a real enemy in the spiritual realm that is upset right now.

There has been a purely satanic and demonic plot to take down the United States of America because we've been a missions center for the world since our founding - with great awakenings, moves of God, and revivals. Even now, God is moving all across the United States, as college football teams are praying for one another. People are recognizing their faith in Jesus Christ whether they win or lose. Whenever the players are interviewed, they're talking about Jesus and they're preaching the Gospel.

God is on the move in America right *now*. If these twenty-one-year-old kids can stand up for their faith, what's our excuse for not doing the same? Why are *we* being quiet? We prayed to get our voices back in the public square and God has made that happen, but what do we bring? The Constitution, sound reasoning, what we know and understand, the heart of our founding fathers to create a great nation that would be free to worship our God without restrictions or restraint, liberty, life, and the pursuit of happiness - we bring all that by pledging our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

Now we must be in the public square with our faith, but it won't happen without a fight. The fight doesn't stop because we saw somebody get elected and a platform set into order that we had prayed for. Now the real fight starts and the real battle begins. Now we have to get on our knees and fight like the warriors of God that we are. Our war doesn't start out here, it starts in our prayer room or prayer closet, or by turning the cab of our truck into a cathedral for the Kingdom of God and taking territory from the enemy. When weird stuff happens, we need to be equipped to fight and kick the devil's butt.

There are times in our lives when we need to go back and re-dig some wells. In the Old Testament, the Amalekites and Philistines came along and covered the wells during times of war to cut off their enemy's water supply. Even with our own walk with God, we get busy and distracted as life happens, holidays and elections come, and the enemy comes behind us and back-fills our wells. If we don't stay on point, we'll actually get caught off guard and realize that our supply was cut off and we didn't realize it - *and then weird things start to happen.*

Luke 4:1 ESV

*"And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil."*

If we think that there's not a real devil - that it's some kind of fairy tale or some mythical thing that was made up, then we're already defeated in the war. In order to do spiritual warfare against the enemy, we don't need to study about the devil, we need to get closer to Jesus. The key to winning spiritual warfare isn't knowing our opponent the *devil* better, it's knowing our Lord better. When we know the Truth and the Truth that makes us free - when a lie comes, we'll recognize it quicker.

We should be focusing on the Lord Jesus Christ and not spending a lot of time with the devil. Some Christians get in trouble because they get entertained and fascinated by spiritual stuff and supernatural things. A George Barna survey showed that Americans are fascinated with the supernatural, because when the world lets them down, people start to look for other-worldly things.

We can study and become experts in the devil and yet forget that we should instead be experts in Jesus rather than in the enemy. A bank teller who is trained by only handling real bills can recognize a counterfeit one because it doesn't feel the same - the texture is off, and the weight is not quite there - something doesn't feel right, and they're able to recognize it as a fake. They're so familiar with the real thing that when the *wrong* thing comes, they can easily recognize it.

Likewise, we've got to get more familiar with Jesus. We've got to draw near to *him* according to James 4:8 - *"Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you."* It's not that complicated - it's simply about knowing who we are in him. Then, when we come face to face with our enemy, we'll know what to do when we or someone else is attacked. We have been delegated authority by Jesus himself to use his name whenever we confront the devil.

Luke 4:3-8 ESV

*“The devil said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.’ And Jesus answered him, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone.”’ And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” And Jesus answered him, “It is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.”’*

We also, like Jesus, must know and use the Word of God in our spiritual battles. The greatest tool that we’ll ever have in our belt for things that get weird is the Word of God and our understanding of our authority in Christ. He confers his authority upon us to rule and reign in the Kingdom of God - *the King’s domain*. Our opponent the devil isn’t dumb. He can use the Word of God in our fight with him.

Luke 4:9-13 ESV

*“And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you”, and “On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.”’ And Jesus answered him, ‘It is said, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.”’ And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.”*

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 ESV

*“For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ...”*

We need to understand the equipment that we’re carrying - we’re packing *heat* and some of us don’t even know it. Soldiers aren’t trained but then sent into battle without weapons of warfare. How crazy would that be? *“Power to destroy strongholds...”* A *stronghold* is anything that *holds strong*. It could be something personal that attaches to us. It could be a behavior or a besetting sin - something that sets us back. It could be something that happens in our country, our school, at work - something that the enemy can hold onto and where he’s got a hook that he can hang his *stuff* on. These things get caught in us and we get caught in these patterns.

We're given the gift of discernment of spirits behind situations or people. Good people can sometimes act ugly because there's something *behind* them. Maybe there's a *stronghold* the enemy has on them. How do we *"take every thought captive?"* We do that by invoking the name of Jesus. When we say, *"in the name of Jesus,"* we're invoking his authority and his power. We can say, *"In the name of Jesus, I capture that intrusive thought that's trying to destroy me right now - the thought that's trying to remind me of who I was twenty years ago - or that I made a mistake yesterday - that I'm not worthy of God's love, mercy, and grace."*

We can invoke the authority of Christ because we're a son or daughter of the Most High God and we have all the authority and rights that the Father has, and he gives his rights, authority, and inheritance, and our covenant - for us to use today - not when we get over to Beulah Land. It's for now, and it's practical for dealing with things at work that come up. It's for finding solutions, and we tap into the authority of Christ. We say, *"in the name of Jesus,"* and it shakes things up.

When we know who we are and who our Lord is, and we *know* him, we can say, *"in the name of Jesus,"* and the enemy shakes in his boots. The devil should be nervous when we wake up in the morning, because we know who we are in Christ, and we understand our authority. We've been given these weapons. We can take thoughts captive and we present them to Christ as we invoke his authority and his power.

Ephesians 6:10-12 ESV

*"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."*

We need to understand that the devil is *real* - his demonic hoards are real. They speak intrusive thoughts into our minds. But, if we know the Truth and God's Word, we know Jesus is *bigger*.

Ephesians 6:13-18 ESV

*"Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication."*

We've been given armor, but we must *put it on*. What good would it do to leave it all in the bunkhouse when we're called out to war? Like muscles that don't get used and that atrophy, our *spiritual* muscles grow weak, losing their strength and size from disuse, and they go dormant. Some of us have forgotten how to fight, but if there's ever a time to take our stand and fight, it's right now. We don't fight in the world, we fight in the spirit. We get in our war room and we go to war in Jesus' name.

Isaiah 54:17 ESV

*"No weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall refute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and their vindication from me, declares the Lord ."*

The Bible says when we pray in the Spirit and we fight, something happens. We build ourselves up in our most holy faith. We're bigger on the inside than we are on the outside, and we become a force to be reckoned with, and we make an impression whenever we enter the room. That's our covenant and our inheritance - these tools and weapons - this ability to fend off intrusive thoughts from our mind. Some of us need to get into a posture of fighting - for us and for the next generation - and begin to take a stand. The "good fight of faith" is *good* - because *we win!*

## **Prayer**

Father, in Jesus' name we thank You for Your Word. Holy Spirit, activate in us what we just heard.

Help us to understand and know what to do with this. Teach us how to fight the good fight.

Teach us how to use the tools and the weapons of warfare that we may stand and fight

the good fight of faith. We honor You. In Jesus' name. Amen