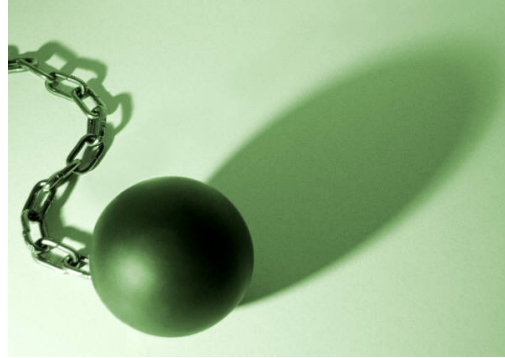


# Spiritual Attack

## *Jack and Trisha Frost*

At our summer conference, I asked 700 people, "How many of you feel that, within the last year, you've been through the most intense spiritual warfare you've ever experienced?" Almost the entire congregation raised their hands. At SPM, we have had many of the ministers with whom we communicate tell us that they have never been through such a difficult time in their ministries and families as they have experienced since January 2000. It is as if the enemy knows that his time is short and he is coming against the people of God with great intensity. (Revelation 12:12)



Therefore, Trisha and I think it is very important to share with you how to recognize when you are drifting off center of faith in the Father's love and His ability to protect and secure you. The enemy's goal is to deceive and distract you from any movement forward into the revelation of the Father's love, and then to hinder you from being a carrier of love to your family, ministry, and the world. We share this not to invoke fear or a victim mentality, but that you may be wise to the schemes of the enemy and to build faith in God's presence and protection over your life. (Ephesians 6:10-19)

There certainly are commonly known areas of unconfessed sin that open doors to increased spiritual attack, such as pride, unresolved conflicts in relationships, ungodly beliefs, jealousies, aggressive striving, doubt and unbelief, the lack of communion with God, and other areas of darkness in our thought life that we do not want brought to the light. While we do not desire to address these more familiar issues at this time, Trisha and I want to share some basic principles of spiritual warfare that we have learned in the past few years. (We wish that space allowed us to amplify each point more fully, but an audiotape on this is available from SPM. Ordering information is provided at the end of this article.)

(1) One of the greatest reasons you may sense an increase in spiritual warfare is that, when increased trials come to your life, it becomes very easy to focus more upon the enemy's ability to curse you than upon God's ability to bless you. We may do this if we give too much credit to the enemy for the problems through which we are going. It then becomes very easy to focus more upon casting out the darkness than dwelling in the light of the Father's love. It takes no striving or anxiety for light and love to dispel darkness and fear. (1 John 1:7, 4:18; Matthew 7:7-11)

(2) New levels, new devils! With each new depth of healing or experience in God's loving nature, there may be increased attacks against you to test your faith. The enemy wants to steal the seed before it can take root and you become a carrier of the Father's love to others. (Matthew 13:19-23)

(3) With each new expansion of Godly influence and ministry to others, spiritual attacks often seem to increase. Increased troubles may be a sign of unconfessed sin, but often it is a counter-attack from the enemy, because you are beginning to do increased damage to his kingdom. (Mark 1:12, 13)

(4) The weeks prior to and following major ministry events, or times when you are about to receive personal ministry, may bring increased warfare over you, your family, or primary relationships. The enemy wants to distract you and diminish the anointing upon you to give or receive ministry. (Matthew 16:13-23)

(5) Stepping into a realm of ministry or authority in which you did not seek God's direction or were not called may increase the sense of attack. You have stepped outside of God's grace for your life. To do so is often rooted in pride and spiritual ambition. (Ephesians 4:7)

(6) Have you been praying against principalities or strongholds over your city without the churches coming together in unity against these things? We learned over the years through men like Frances Frangipane not to assault these strongholds without the churches in the city coming together in unity. Until citywide unity is established, it is often best to focus your prayer and intercession life within the realm of light and love – resting in the Father's love, hearing His voice, and speaking His words. (John 17:21-26)

(7) Are you in right relationship with spiritual authority (spiritual mothers and fathers)? Can they think of you with joy in their hearts? Are your thoughts toward them full of honor, respect, and a desire to get behind them and make them successful? (Hebrews 13:17; Romans 13:1-5) Negative responses to any of these questions may open the door to increased spiritual attack. (See our audiotapes on "From Slavery to Sonship" and "The Salt of the Covenant.")

(8) If you are a leader in ministry or at work, is your staff or team in unity with you and your vision? Do their attitudes, words, and actions reflect honor, respect, and submission (sonship) toward you in all ways? If not, this can diminish the rest in which you walk and increase the possibility of spiritual attack against you. Love and loyalty from your team protects you as a leader and covers your faults and weaknesses as they stand in the gap for you. (1 Peter 4:8; Exodus 17:8-13) If not, their attitudes can open doors to darkness. This can also apply to your family relationships. (Luke 22:47-53)

We have found that the first way the enemy seeks to deceive and distract you is through a spirit of dissatisfaction or strife. Your thoughts become dissatisfied with family members, people at church, or others. You may not agree with decisions others are making and you begin to have a heightened sense of their faults or weaknesses. You then start feeling as if they do not care about your needs or ideas. The accuser of the brethren gets a foothold in your thought life and unity begins to fade away. Once you begin to easily discern and disarm the spirit of dissatisfaction or strife by casting down the temptation in your thought life, the enemy will seek other means to detour you from maturing and influencing others with the Father's love.

If the enemy cannot stop you from doing good things, he will try to keep you busy doing good things in order to distract you from dwelling in the center of the Father's love. As you mature and your influence increases, people drawn to God's love within you will begin seeking you out as the source of God's love. You may find yourself slipping into

hyper-religious activity, and an attitude of grace, patience, and love toward others begins to slip away, resulting in an angry edge to your ministry or family life.

When busyness comes, priorities often get shifted out of order and temptation may come in the area of neglecting intimacy with God, family, and others. It leads to independence, self-reliance, and control. Child-like dependence upon God and interdependence upon others waivers. Grace begins to fade as relationships seem less important and the task at hand is all you can see.

The enemy may also try to keep you insecure and in fear by attacking your finances. This distracts you from dependence upon the Father. You may even develop an attitude toward Him that He is not faithful to provide, or you may focus your dissatisfaction upon others, thinking that they are not helping meet your needs. By doing so, you put your dependence upon man, diminishing your child-like trust and rest in the Father.

The enemy will also go after any physical weakness or generational weak link in your physical body. He wants to keep your body weak and infirmed so that your energy and Godly influence on others diminishes. This is why nutrition and exercise may be of major importance to those who struggle physically, especially those over 40. (See our audiotapes on "Pulling Down Strongholds Through Prayer and Fasting.")

(1) Of utmost importance is having more faith in the power of God to protect you than in the enemy to harm you. (Psalm 91; 1 John 5:4, 14, 15, 19) The safest place is to see yourself as a little child with a great big Father. God does not ask you to step into a deeper realm of influence for which He has not already prepared your heart. Simply humble yourself daily as a little child before the Father and do not think of yourself more highly than you ought. Spend time each day just sitting in the Father's presence and allowing Him to express His love and comfort to you. It is helpful to play gentle and loving worship music and to meditate upon the words while you wait on the Father to reveal Himself to you. (1 Peter 5:5-10; Zephaniah 3:17)

(2) Search your heart for any unconfessed areas of sin, such as self-love, pride, strife, resentment, hidden darkness, unrestrained thought life, fear, or jealousy. Close any door opened to sin through confession, repentance, and forgiveness. (Psalm 139:23, 24; 32:1-7)

(3) Share your struggles, thoughts, feelings, and temptations with your spouse, spiritual authority, and prayer partner. Keep walking in the light of openness and transparency with people, and the enemy has no right to traffic in those areas. He only has legal ground in our areas of unconfessed darkness. (1 John 1:5-9; Romans 13:12-14) (See our audiotape on "Walking in the Light.")

(4) Be sure that you are in right relationship with spiritual authority and that their thoughts about you bring them joy because of your heart of sonship (honor, respect, and submission) toward them. This is a heart issue and not a performance thing. Authority is a covering to you. (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 2:17-21)

(5) Ask your spiritual father or mother to speak into your life any admonition, correction, wisdom, or discernment to any possible open doors or harmful relational patterns they may see in your life. Apply confession, repentance, and forgiveness. (Galatians 6:1, 2; James 5:14-16)

(6) Be sure that you seek out times with your friends, prayer partners, and/or family for corporate prayer over your life, family, and ministry. One puts a thousand to flight, but two puts ten thousand to flight! (Deuteronomy 32:30)

(7) If the attack seems intense, enter into extended times of solitude, meditative prayer, and fasting. Desperate times require desperate measures! Seasons of increased attack are times when you must be still, wait on the Lord, and refocus. If you are in a season where you do not have the strength for a normal fast, then make it a Daniel Fast. (Psalm 46:10; Isaiah 40:29-31; 58:5-12) (See our "...Fasting" tapes.)

(8) Do not make any major decisions without first seeking God's voice, and then your family and your spiritual fathers coming into agreement. Talk about and pray over each important move you make in ministry and life. Be patient and wait until you have a green light and there is peace in the hearts of all parties involved. (Proverbs 11:14; 24:6)

(9) Be sure that you have unity in your family, workplace, and ministry. Quickly resolve all relational conflicts and negative attitudes with openness, love, grace, and gentleness. Pray that any negative words or thoughts over you be broken. (Isaiah 54:17; Galatians 6:1-2; Psalm 133)

Remember!!! Not all spiritual attacks are results of doors opened by sin. They may be counter-attacks from the enemy to diminish your faith in resting in the Father's love and influencing others with God's grace. Be sure that all open doors of darkness are closed. If you do not, you may become angry with God, blaming Him for unanswered prayer, and it becomes very easy to stop seeking Him. You may then find past counterfeit affections, judgments, and ungodly beliefs springing back to life within you. This reveals that your walk in the Father's love has only been an addiction to the experience and emotions. You need a fresh revelation of God taking that which is meant for evil against you and turning it all for good. (Genesis 50:20) What the enemy seeks to suppress, the Father's love will cause to grow!

There are two dimensions in the process of maturing and being empowered in the Father's love. The first is when God expresses His affectionate love and grace to us and wins our heart for Himself. (Mark 1:11) During this part of the process in our walk, we do not usually pursue purity, but we long for an emotional encounter and experience. The second is a higher but more dangerous way. It is in the wilderness, where the heart is purified and the process of maturity is quickened. (Mark 1:12, 13) Let us see how our character can be developed during wilderness wanderings or times of increased spiritual attacks.

(1) Cease striving against the enemy and focusing on the negative, and let your cry go continually to the Father. Patiently wait on Him and He will bring you into a deeper revelation of His kindness and goodness toward you. "I will lead her into the wilderness where I will speak kindly to her" (Hosea 2:14). In Job's worst hour, God gave him a life-changing revelation of Himself. "My ears had heard of You but now my eyes have seen you" (Job 42:5).

(2) Our wilderness sufferings expose areas of independence and the counterfeit affections and comforts upon which we have relied. The desires for worldly comforts and affections rise to the surface, then begin to diminish little by little as we realize that these things no longer have the ability to meet our needs. (Luke 15:14-20) The fire of

God's love will burn away the wood, hay, and stubble in our lives and purify the gold and silver. (1 Corinthians 3:11-15)

(3) Impure motives in our relationships with God and others are exposed during the wilderness as negative attitudes and emotions continually surface. Relationships that have domination, intimidation, or manipulation at work in them become increasingly more fragile. We realize how many of our relationships are based upon what others can do for us, rather than upon a desire for intimacy, purity, and living our life as a carrier of the

Father's love. (Matthew 17:21-23)

(4) Wilderness warfare increases our sensitivity to "respectable Christian sins." These are the darkened areas of our soul where we had been desensitized in the past by the world system, but now begin to see them for what they really are: self-love, pride, competition, and a willingness to strive for the praise of man. (James 3:13-18; 1 Peter 4:12, 13)

(5) Spiritual warfare compels us to retreat into the center of God's love where peace is restored during times of crisis. (John 16:23-27)

(6) As we learn to daily flee to the arms of the Father, spiritual warfare develops within us perseverance, endurance, patience, and spiritual maturity. (James 1:2-4)

(7) Spiritual warfare develops faith as we learn to focus our life and thoughts upon eternal things, rather than temporal. Every choice and decision begins to be guided by the thought, "What does this choice mean to eternity?" (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

(8) It is spiritual warfare that increases the anointing and ability for you to radically influence others with the Father's love, comfort, and grace. "The Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4). You learn to daily live your life experiencing the Father's love and then giving His love away to the next person you meet, even in the midst of the storm -- secured in love, then sent to comfort others! (Luke 23:33-43)

All of the above redemptive qualities of spiritual warfare develop over time and seasons. You do not usually sense these qualities maturing in you during the warfare, but God's love and grace are purifying and preparing you for the glory that lies ahead, being a carrier of the Father's love. "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:18, 28, 37-39).

In the Father's love,

Jack & Trisha Frost

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