

FAITH IS ACTION

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GIVE NO PLACE TO THE DEVIL



FOREWORD BY SHARON HARDY KNOTTS

“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force” (Matthew 11:12). There are two fundamental, unchangeable facts in this statement of Jesus:

1. Those in God’s kingdom have and will suffer violent attacks from our adversary.

2. We will not give up any ground to the enemy, and we will take back by force whatever he attacks.

So you better get your armor on and keep your sword honed, and your spiritual intelligence from the Holy Ghost on a clear channel!

We are in a war with the forces of darkness, and we must take the necessary actions to safeguard ourselves from satanic attacks (Ephesians 6:10-18).

I believe that the evil one has issued satanic assignments against the Church and all things Christian. We are experiencing not only *“fiery trials of faith”* that Peter said we are to expect so as *“not to think that something strange is occur-*

ing”—but strategic attacks of the enemy (1Peter 4:12). It’s time to *“gird up the loins of our mind,”* Peter said, and he warned:

*“Be sober; be vigilant; for your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour; Whom **resist steadfast in the faith**, knowing that the **same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world”*** (1Peter 5:8-9).

We must be pro-active and not just re-active. By this vigilant stance, we can thwart many satanic assignments against us before they are even launched. When we are attacked, we must resist steadfastly and **Give No Place to the devil!**

BINDING THE STRONG MAN

The Word of God described these last days as a time when *“many false prophets”* would fill the land and *“many people would be seduced and deceived by lying spirits”* (1John 4:1, 1Tim. 4:1). We have seen an increase of people of God who are under the attack of Satan through spirits of oppression and vexation as

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Robert L Hardy

a means to overcome them through a weakness, and to bind and afflict them, and even do great harm in some cases.

The truth is, the only thing that will keep the child of God free from error and deception is the whole counsel of God's Word. If one is strong spiritually, having a solid foundation in the Word of God and a substantial prayer life, and is wise to the wiles of the enemy, the devil will not be successful in oppressing and binding his vessel.

God has been dealing with me on how the enemy oppresses Christians, and what things open up the door to oppression and fear. Jesus taught us in Mark 3:27: "*No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.*"

Before the enemy can *spoil* the strong man's house, he must first *bind* him. In order to bind him and thereby rob him of his treasures, he must *weaken* him. The classic Bible example of this was *Samson*. He was the O.T. type of the Holy-Ghost-filled Christian. No one could conquer him. He was invincible. The enemy's repeated efforts to bind him were fruitless. Again and again, he thwarted them, and with every victory he waxed mightier. The Philistines' final strategy was to *find his weakness* and work on it. How could Samson have been so ignorant of Delilah's devices? Each time he cooperative-

ly played into her hands he *gave place or opportunity* for the enemy to bind him.

The enemy concerns himself with finding weak points in us and then working on them to try to cause us to give in under pressure. No matter how strong or disciplined a person is, if Satan can find his weak point, he can use it to break him down. This holds true in the physical realm as well as in the spiritual realm. In this message we will address both. First, I will relate my own experience dealing with the physical side, and how Satan often seeks to attack a child of God with sickness.

SPIRITS OF INFIRMITY

When any child of God allows himself to become run down physically and chronically fatigued, he is vulnerable for Satan to afflict him with an *infirm spirit*. If he breaks the laws of health, he is going to pay the price for it. Furthermore, he *is giving place* for the enemy to have an opportunity to attack with sickness.

Years ago, before I was saved, I became *demon possessed in my body* when through a weakness, I injured my back. No medical treatment could affect this spirit of infirmity, and therefore, could not cure me. It took the power of God through the laying on of hands to heal me. A lot of people will never be healed until the infirm spirit that is keeping them in their condition is cast out. In Luke 13:11-13, Jesus delivered a woman who had been physically

afflicted by an *infirm spirit* for eighteen years:

“And behold there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid hands on her and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.”

My condition was similar. No medical help could affect a cure. I was bound by a *spirit of infirmity*, from which I was loosed when my mother laid an anointed prayer cloth, that the whole church had prayed and fasted over, upon my body. After the Lord miraculously healed my back (My injury was so acute that my left leg was drawn up three inches shorter than my right), we moved, and I practically moved all the furniture by myself. Then I carried a metal trash can full of coal into the house. When I stooped down to look into the furnace, I could not straighten up.

I began to call on God, and He answered, “Son, didn’t you know not to abuse your body?” From then on I learned *not to give place to the devil* to attack me physically by becoming weak and vulnerable to re-injury.

God is telling me to tell His people not to allow themselves to get weak physically. Just because you are a Christian and believe in divine healing, does not mean that you can break the laws of health. If one eats the proper foods and abstains from

those that are proven to cause certain ailments, and gets proper rest, he will not get down and weak and open up the door for the enemy to attack with sickness. I remember when I first got saved, whenever there was some epidemic of sickness going around, the devil would always try to get me to go on a long fast. He knew what he was doing; trying to get me down physically and susceptible to an attack of sickness.

We are the *Body of Christ*, and we must discern that *our body is the Lord’s body*. This not only means on a spiritual plain, but on the physical as well. When we break the laws of health, we are going to get into trouble for not discerning the Lord’s body. (1Corinthians 11:29). Satan is waiting for an opportunity, and when someone breaks those laws of health, he sees a weakness that he can enter.

There is a difference between an *affliction* and a *sickness*. Why did James say in his epistle, (5:13): *“If there are any afflicted among you, let him pray”*? In verse 14 he continued: *“Is there any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him...”*

A *physical affliction* can be brought on by the individual, because he is doing something to cause himself to become weak. If the Lord heals him, and he does the same things all over again, he is *giving place* to be afflicted again. If someone suffers from high blood pressure because he is obese, there is not much point in God healing

him if he is going to do the same thing that brought on his condition. (It is a fact that many Americans suffer from ailments such as hypertension and diabetes that are brought on by overeating).

Many years ago, I began to suffer from headaches and weakness and then I developed chest pains. I began to battle in prayer for my healing, and even as I prayed, I would feel hot flashes of pain sweep over my body. The Lord spoke to me, "Son, you have allowed yourself to become overweight and are endangering your health."

For a good while I had been gradually putting on the extra pounds on a diet high in butter, eggs, ice cream, etc. Like most people, I didn't want to admit that I was getting bigger than I'd ever been. Consequently, my blood pressure was also going up. A couple of times when I was alone in my room, I actually thought I was going to die, the symptoms were so intense. I believed God for my healing and refused any medicine. I told God that I was going to change my eating habits, and I did. I lost about fifty pounds, felt better than I had in years, and I learned *not to give place to the devil*, because he will surely take it!

GIVE NO OPPORTUNITY!

Before I move on to the points concerning the mental and spiritual warfare, I want to examine the terminology I am using from the Word of God found in Ephesians 4:27: "*Nei-*

ther give place to the devil!"

You have heard the sayings, "Give him an inch, and he'll take a mile," and "Don't let him get his foot in the door." This is modern vernacular referring to giving someone *the advantage* over you. This is exactly what Satan tries to do: Get the advantage over us, and the time when he seeks to do so is when we are the most susceptible to his attack. The thing I like about the Word of God is that it allows us to know this *beforehand*. Paul said in 2Corinthians 2:11: "*Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.*"

The word *devices* in Greek means *to defraud someone by trickery and treacherous means*. This is all Satan has in mind: *to steal, to kill, and to destroy men's lives*. (John10:10), and especially to defraud the child of God of eternal life. We recognize that this is his intention, and always has been. Jesus said that "*he was a murderer from the beginning!*" (John8:44). Therefore, when we begin to play into his hands like Samson did, we are setting the scene for him to take the advantage. He is always probing, trying to detect a weakness in our faith, and he has been playing this game for millennia. He waits for *an opportunity* to execute his devices.

TEMPTATIONS OF CHRIST

If Satan had the audacity to tempt the Son of God during His humanity, then he is going to come against every one of us, and in the same

ways. The Word teaches us that *Jesus was tempted in all points like as we* (Heb. 4:15). This is common knowledge amongst believers, and we fully expect to be tested by God and tempted by Satan at some time or another. When we examine the Temptation of Christ, we find that Satan chose a *particular time* to make his attack: When the Lord had been fasting for forty days and nights and was weak from hunger.

In his first attack against Jesus, he tempted Him to turn the stones into bread, appealing to *the lust of the flesh*. Secondly, he showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment, appealing to *the lust of the eye*, and promising them to Him if He would worship him, an appeal to *the pride of life* (See 1John 2:15). When Jesus had resisted him again and again with the Word of God, Satan backed off, thus waiting for another opportunity to attack. This is brought out by the Greek translation of Luke 4:14:

“And when the devil had ended all the temptations, he departed from him for a season.”

The Greek word translated into the KJV as **departed** means *to stand away from*. From the English reading one would tend to assume that Satan *left altogether*. Personally, we might believe that there are times when we do not have to concern ourselves with being on guard for his attack. **This is not true!**

This is further supported by the Greek meaning of the term *for a*

season. This is better translated and means *for an opportune time*. (As it was translated in Galatians 5:10: *“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men...”*) Therefore, we understand that Satan, having been successfully opposed on every attack by our Lord, just *backed off for a time*, waiting for an *opportune time* to try again; a time when he might have a better chance to get the *advantage*.

And this is how he conducts his warfare against the child of God: He looks for an *opportunity*. He looks for an *open door* that he can get his foot in. He knows that if he can get his foot in the door, the odds are in his favor that he can move right in.

STOP WHAT YOU'RE DOING!

This brings us to the point Paul was making when he said, *“Neither give place to the devil!”* This is the imperative voice in the Greek which denotes *a command*, and the *present tense* is more accurately translated: **“Stop giving place to the devil.”** The message to the Ephesians was concerning their permitting their anger, which in itself was not sin, to get out of hand, which allowed Satan to seize the opportunity to tempt them into sin. They were *already* giving Satan an opportunity to work, and were commanded to *stop giving him place!*

In other words, if you have been allowing Satan to get an advantage over you, be it through a lack of temperance as in their case, or by

breaking the laws of health, which we have already discussed, or by making provision for the flesh to fulfill it in the lusts thereof, which we will discuss: *Stop Giving Place To The Devil!*

LYING AND DECEIVING SPIRITS

We have discussed the danger of letting one's body get down and weak and giving Satan an opportunity to attack with sickness. What can be even more dangerous is to allow one's *mind* to get overtired, because this is an open door for Satan to attack with oppression and even possession. The *spirit man* is the seat of one's understanding and revelation of the things of God (1Cor. 2:10–11). Do not allow yourself to get weak in the spirit! Just as you must have a good natural diet to stay physically healthy, you must have a good spiritual diet to have a strong spiritual constitution to resist not only sin, but the attack of Satan through lying and deceiving spirits.

The Holy Spirit prophesied in 1Timothy 4:1: "*Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.*" The Greek translation reads *teaching demons*, and we have certainly witnessed an invasion of teaching demons in Christendom today! When one is attacked by a seducing spirit or teaching demon, *his mind is invaded with a lie*. Satan cultivates this lie to lead him into total error and decep-

tion. At this point, *his very soul is in jeopardy*. If he continues to give heed to the lie, then he believes the lie, and *is damned!* (2Thess. 2:9–13).

When Satan, through these seducing spirits and influence of false teachers, leads the child of God away from the truth into error and vain jangling, he can possess his soul with that spirit until he may never get free and come back to the truth! Often the door to such deception is opened when the individual lets down spiritually and becomes carnal and sensual. In this condition, he does not receive the spiritual things of God, and can even become hostile to the Word of God, which is the only antidote to the lies of Satan! (Romans 8:5-8).

This is surely no time to play around with sin and the world to see how naturally and carnally one can live without backsliding altogether! All we have to do is make the first stumble, and Satan will seek to overpower us through that weakness.

I am reminded of the old western story of the man who was seeking to hire a driver to drive his stage coach on a route that was very dangerous with many hair-pin curves: Those applying for the job had to manifest their experience by driving a part of the trail that included an extremely steep hair-pin curve around an high mountainside. The first driver, showing off his skills, whipped around the curves, getting as close to the edge of the side of the mountain as he could to show how confi-

dent and able he was to maneuver the coach. By contrast, the second driver slowly hugged the inside of the mountain, steering as far from the edge as he could.

Well, the second driver got the job much to the surprise of the first. The owner of the stage coach was more impressed by the one who was more concerned with being safe and sure, than being daring and skillful. And a lot of Christians today are like that man who kept as close to the edge as he could, but when you stay that close to the world, you are in imminent danger of falling off of the road to heaven. If a wheel falls off, or a rock slides down, Satan's got you!

Most saints are wise enough to watch out for open sin, but the way that the enemy will try to trick this last-day church is to lead them into spiritual error. As we have quoted from 1Tim. 4:1, Satan has dispatched a special horde of lying and seducing spirits in this day to cause those who were once saved to depart from the faith. This is why the child of God must not become weak in his spirit man, lest he become possessed by a *doctrine of Satan*, from which recovery is rare. I have known people who have gone into false doctrine who once knew the truth, and you cannot change them for the world.

Now let me point out that I am not talking about someone possessed with a demon that makes them scream and scratch and fight

and act like an animal, but one who has been invaded in his mind by a lying and seducing spirit: There is a difference between being possessed by a lying devil, and being influenced by a lying devil. The false prophets of Ahab were possessed by lying demons, but Ahab was seduced to lie. He was not possessed by a lying demon, but he was possessed by the lie from the demon. He believed the lie, and he was damned (1 Kings 22).

In order for one to be led away by a lying or seducing spirit, he must have a weakness in his spirit: He may lack the knowledge of the Word of God (Hosea 4:6), or he may lack the anointing to quicken it. Without the anointing, it is a dead letter, and not the life-giving Word (2 Cor. 3:6). Although he may have the knowledge of the Word, he does not have the true understanding of it, and this accounts for many who are in false doctrine. It takes the Holy Spirit to lead and guide one into all truth; for He is the Spirit of Truth.(John 16:13).

TRY THE SPIRITS!

On the other hand, he could have an *anointing*, but not have the Word of God to prove it. Then he would be susceptible to *believe every spirit!* One cannot *try the spirits* without God's Word to see whether they be of God or not. Just because a person is *spiritual and anointed* does not mean or guarantee that he is *in the truth*.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the **spirits** (plural) whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1John 4:1).

Many false prophets are in the land, and they prophesy *by a lying spirit*. Every prophet is possessed by a spirit: If he is God’s prophet, he has God’s Spirit inspiring them. If he is false, then he is possessed by a lying spirit. God’s Spirit operates the true gift of prophecy which is to *forth-tell* and to *foretell*. When a false prophet prophesies, it is by demonic inspiration to seduce the hearer and lead him into error by its *imitating gift*. Wherever God’s prophets are prophesying, Satan also has his false prophets, and generally they are in greater number. Elijah had to stand against Ahab’s 850 false prophets of Baal.

How does one know the false prophet from the true? By his *flow*? By his *anointing*? *All prophets have a flow or anointing*. To prophesy or have a prophetic spirit means to *flow forth*. The only way to judge the true anointing and flow is by what he speaks; whether or not it is in accord with the *written Word of God!* Peter warned in 2Peter 1:19: “*We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto you do well that you take heed...*”

The prophet of God, Isaiah, when confronted by the false prophets of his day, admonished the people: “*To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according*

to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (8:20).

People are fooled when they are not rooted and grounded in the Word. I don’t care how inspiring and anointed a prophet is, the minute he crosses the Word, the Spirit of God brings the Scriptures to me to show me where he is wrong. I don’t care if he goes a little further and gives me a sign; if he is prophesying a lie, I do not accept it! God commanded Israel that if a false prophet arises and prophesies for His people to worship other gods and idols, and gives a sign or wonder, and it comes to pass to prove the false prophet, not to hearken unto it, but to put him to death! (Deut. 13:1-5).

LYING SIGNS & WONDERS

The thing that will cause many of this generation to split hell wide open will be during the time of the Anti-christ and his False Prophet. He will come with “*lying signs and wonders*,” that will deceive many on the earth by means of his “*great wonders and miracles*” (Rev. 13:12-14).

Many are fooled by a *seducing spirit* which is an *imitating spirit*. It imitates the Holy Ghost by transforming into an *angel of light*. This is especially true when it comes to a Christian who has been saved many years. He comes as a messenger from God with a new *super revelation*. In most every false doctrine without exception (i.e. Buddhism, Mormonism, Islam), the founder saw an angel, or had a dream or vision, or a

voice spoke to him this new revelation that *nobody else knows!* He appeals to their pride and self-knowledge by telling them that they are *special*, and God has chosen them to reveal this great revelation.

Paul warned the church in Galatians 1:6-9 that there are they who “*pervert the Gospel of Christ.*” He staunchly declared, “*But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed!*”

He further stated in 2Cor. 11:13-15 that such are “*false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness...*”

KNOW THEM BY THEIR FRUITS

So why are so many people fooled by what they perceive to be the Spirit of God? They feel a supernatural presence or anointing, or they see a supernatural sign, and they believe that it is God. When Moses went before Pharaoh and cast down his rod and turned it into a serpent by the power of God, the magicians of Pharaoh also cast down their rods and turned them into serpents. It was a contest between God’s power and demonic power. When Philip went down to Samaria, Simon the Sorcerer had fooled the whole city with witch-

craft and sorcery, and they even believed that he had the power of God (Acts 8).

How then can you tell a real servant of God from the false? Not by their gifts! We judge them by the Word of God, and by their fruits. Now if you do not know the fruit of the Spirit, you better learn them: “*Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law*” (Galatians 5:22-23).

When I was a young preacher and became aware of all the false preachers in the Ministry, I got so discouraged I almost quit preaching! The biggest blow I had to my faith was when the Lord let the scales fall from my eyes and showed me that everyone who called themselves “saved” was not! I almost did not stand up under it. Some of you may have wondered why God doesn’t just uncover all the false prophets and expose them openly: Jesus said that if you pull up the tares, you may pull up some of the wheat too. He said to let them grow together, and He will take care of them when He comes (Matthew 13).

THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

You will never be fooled by a false prophet if you are thoroughly schooled in the Word and led by the Spirit of God. You will never be defeated if you have on *the whole armor of God* as outlined in Ephesians 6:10-18. This term *whole armor* means to be careful not to

leave out *any part!* This is the only sure way to be able to withstand in the evil day and to *quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.* We do not have to be defeated. God has fixed it so that no matter how great the devil's opposition is, *we can stand!* The Word of God will help us to overcome our weak points so that Satan cannot tempt and attack us through them. No matter how strong one is, *he is only as strong as his weakest point.* If the enemy can find that weak point and work on it, after awhile, he will be overcome by it. Put simply: *Anything you don't overcome, will overcome you!*

You may have heard the Greek legend of *Achilles*. When he was born, his mother took him down to the Styx River, where holding him by one heel, she dipped him into the water. By this, he would be invincible, and nothing could harm or kill him, because the water had a magic power of protection. When he was grown, he went out to fight many battles and wars, and seemingly, nothing could defeat him. No sword or arrow or spear could penetrate him. But someone learned of his secret power and of the fact that the only place that he had not been covered by the water was on his one heel. Thus his enemy concentrated on that one weak point where Achilles was vulnerable. Shot with an arrow right into his heel, Achilles fell dead. He had been defeated by his only weak point!

Well, I have on the whole armor of God, and the shield of faith,

which is able to quench all of the fiery darts of the devil! I have been dipped in the Blood of Jesus, and baptized in the Holy Spirit, and Satan cannot get to me! If there is any part that is not under the Blood, he is going to find it. He is looking for an *Achilles' heel!*

We have seen that we cannot allow ourselves to become vulnerable to Satan on any point. When we let down physically or spiritually, we create an opportunity for him to attack us on our weak point. Many Christians lose out because of *spiritual laziness*. They have worked for the Lord many years, cutting down the trees, and digging out the stumps, and letting the good seed take root in their hearts. God began to water it, and then they got lazy. They quit going to church so much; they quit praying and reading the Word, and just let the thorns and thistles, "*the cares of life and the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts for other things,*" creep in. Before long, all the good seed is choked out, while the seeds of lust and greed have taken over.

Sometimes Satan invades the mind of the child of God with *evil suggestions of sin*. This is one of his ways to tempt you. Let me point out that we have no control over Satan's suggestions to us, and the temptation itself is not sin. *It is sin when one entertains the thought and desires to carry it out.* Generally, Satan will choose a weakness of the flesh that was the thing that had the person bound the most when he was a sin-

ner. If it is a sexual sin, he will work on stirring up those desires through the five senses. Again, this is where Satan must be rebuffed and resisted *immediately*. If we entertain the idea or suggestion at all, he recognizes a weakness, and seizes the opportunity to take the advantage. The key is *not to give him place, but to resist him at once!*

God's Word commands: "*Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof*" (Rom. 13:14). You know you are going to get into trouble when you do certain things and go certain places that serve to stir up the lusts of the flesh. Now God did not put that pressure on you: You did. In fact, James tells us: "*God*

does not tempt any man (to do evil), but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin..." (Js. 1:13-15).

Regardless of what the attack may be, whether physical, mental, spiritual, or natural, the counterattack is the same: "*Resist the devil, and he will flee from you!*" (Js. 4:7).

In a nutshell, this requires us to be filled with the Word of God and the Spirit of God, to try the spirits to see if they be of God, to put on the whole armor of God that we may be able to withstand (resist), and to **give no place to the devil!**

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