

Strife – the snare of the Enemy

I believe that in these last days the enemy will use strife to keep us from walking in the victorious (Kingdom) life God has planned for us as well as cause offenses between believers.

The Devil is called “The accuser of the brethren”
– Revelation 12:10

The Devil will use circumstances to kindle strife which cause us to think and say things we should not causing unresolved offenses.

These offenses will cause us to leave relationships God has put in our lives as well as kindle new relationships that are only gained because we left the place God had for us.

God does move us in or out of relationships from time to time but we should always be working towards resolving conflicts. Whenever strife is a major factor in a separation it is a doorway for sin and ultimately a place where the enemy could gain a stronghold in our life.

When there is a Spirit of offense operating it will cause us to betray one another. We might have had a strong relationship with someone but now there is something trying to separate us. The seed of separation gets in when we get our eyes off Jesus and start to look at the wrong things.

Matthew 24:10

10 And then many will be **offended**, will betray one another, and will hate one another. NKJV

- Offend – “*skandalizo*” – to set a trap to ensnare something
- This is where we get the word, scandal

Proverbs 17:14

14 The beginning of strife is like releasing water;
Therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts. NKJV

Proverbs 10:12

12 Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins. NKJV

Proverbs 16:28

28 A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends. NKJV

Proverbs 20:3

3 It is honorable for a man to stop striving,
Since any fool can start a quarrel. NKJV

Genesis 13:7-9

7 And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land.
8 So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. 9 Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left." NKJV

Genesis 13:10-12

10 And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. 11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. NKJV

- God is about to enter into a covenant with Abraham that will bring covenant and blessing
- Lot moves into Sodom and Gomorrah – Greener?
- There are times we need to separate from others so strife will cease
- There are other times we must stay and reconcile
- We must never allow strife (murmuring, bickering and gossip) to exist in our home = no peace, no blessing
- Blessing and strife can not co-exist

Moses could not enter the Promised Land because of strife

Numbers 27:12-14

12 Now the LORD said to Moses: "Go up into this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the children of Israel. 13 And when you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was gathered. 14 For in the Wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, you rebelled against My command to hallow Me at the waters before their eyes." (These are the waters of Meribah, at Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin.) NKJV

- Meribah – Strife, bickering and contention
- Strife breeds rebellion and disobedience

Water from the Rock – 1st time

Exodus 17:1-2

1 Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink. 2 Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." NKJV

- Many times strife enters because of a sense of lack
- We really don't trust God to meet a need

Exodus 17:4-6

4 So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!" 5 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. 6 Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." NKJV

- The chastisement for our peace was upon Him
– Isaiah 53:5, Isaiah 26:3

Water from the Rock – 2nd time

Numbers 20:2-4 NKJV

2 Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. 3 And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: "If only we had died when our brethren died before the LORD! 4 Why have you brought up the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here?"

Numbers 20:7-8

7 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 8 "Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. **Speak to the rock** before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals." NKJV

Numbers 20:10-11

10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! **Must we bring water for you out of this rock?**" 11 Then **Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice** with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank. NKJV

Numbers 20:12

12 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." NKJV

The water was a foreshadowing of the Holy Spirit that the Lord promised to all who believe – **John 7:37-39**

The rock was a model of Christ, who had to be struck (crucified) – **Isaiah 53**, before the Spirit could be given.

But after His death one only needed to ask to receive the Spirit. – Living Waters

By striking the rock the second time Moses was in essence crucifying Jesus again.

Jesus only had to die once for us to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. After that all we have to do is ask to receive Him – **Luke 11:9-13**

When we face a situation where strife is trying to get in do I trust that the Lord's sacrifice is enough? Do I believe that through the Holy Spirit I can now speak life into my situation?

Many times we allow our words to get the best of us and they kindle strife. – Death and life – **Proverbs 18:21**

This is a sign that we do not trust the Lord to take care of a situation

We don't believe the Holy Spirit is enough

It is a true sign that we are **living a carnal life**

When we live in strife it stifles our spiritual growth

1 Corinthians 3:1-3

1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are **envy, strife, and divisions** among you, are you not carnal **and behaving like mere men?** NKJV

James 3:16

For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. NKJV

This one **sin** can keep our worship from being genuine and hinder our prayers

4 types of Sin in the Bible – Judas Goat (Perry Stone)

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Mark 11:25-26

25 "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses." NKJV

Proverbs 17:1

1 Better is a dry morsel with quietness,
Than a house full of feasting with strife. NKJV

Do we really believe God accepts our offering in a house full of strife?

Can I live in strife and assume everything is ok just because I come and sing songs, shake hands and give an offering?

Malachi 1:7-8

7 "You offer defiled food on My altar, but say, 'In what way have we defiled You?' By saying, 'The table of the LORD is contemptible.'

8 And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, Is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?" Says the LORD of hosts. NKJV

Matthew 5:21-26

21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' 22 But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. 23 Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26 Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny. NKJV

- When you live a life full of strife it will affect every area of your life
- It will affect your emotional and spiritual well being
- It will affect your physical well being
- It will affect your finances
- It will cause you to make emotional decisions
- It will cause you to make decisions that are contrary to the will of God for your life

Strife will cause division, separation and offense

It can also lead to unwanted stress in your life

Too much stress can lead to a condition called distress

Distress can lead to physical symptoms including headaches, upset stomach, elevated blood pressure, chest pain, and problems sleeping. Research suggests that stress also can bring on or worsen certain symptoms or diseases. Stress also becomes harmful when people use alcohol, tobacco, or drugs to try and relieve their stress. Unfortunately, instead of relieving the stress and returning the body to a relaxed state, these substances tend to keep the body in a stressed state and cause more problems.

Consider the following:

Forty-three percent of all adults suffer adverse health effects from stress.

Seventy-five percent to 90% of all doctor's office visits are for stress-related ailments and complaints.

Stress can play a part in problems such as headaches, high blood pressure, heart problems, diabetes, skin conditions, asthma, arthritis, depression, and anxiety.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) declared stress a hazard of the workplace. Stress costs American industry more than \$300 billion annually. The lifetime prevalence of an emotional disorder is more than 50%, often due to chronic, untreated stress reactions.