Exposing the Spirit of Strife (NY)
Creflo Dollar
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Summary

The spirit of strife is deadly, and can be found all around us. It comes directly from the devil, who hates us and uses strife as a tool to invade and infiltrate our lives. This spirit provides opportunities to take offense, and is a trap designed to divide us and destroy our unity; however, God is the solution. If we reject Him as the only way to successfully deal with strife, we will suffer the consequences of separation, division, and building barriers between ourselves and others, and between ourselves and God. We conquer it by embracing a godly, humble attitude. The specifics of this include pursuing the things of peace, being likeminded in Christ, avoiding self-centeredness, and believing in God’s love for us so that we can share it with others. Deliberately and intentionally doing these things unifies us and keeps us at peace.

A. Strife is Satan’s way of dividing us. Therefore, we must deal with it on the spiritual level.
   1. Strife is an enemy we must eliminate. It has invaded our country, our homes, our marriages, and even our churches. We must be aware of its potential to damage and destroy our relationships.
      a. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (John 10:10).
      b. Strife is vigorous, bitter conflict, discord and antagonism toward someone else, bickering, and violent disagreement.
   2. Strife is a demonic issue. God knows exactly how to deal with it; He is the answer to strife.
      There are several strategies to overcome it:
      a. Crucify the flesh; specifically, our self-centeredness.
      b. Recognize who the real enemy is. Our real enemy operates on a spiritual level; it is not the person in front of us.
c. Start operating in love; strife operates in hate. Love covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8).

d. Humble yourself. We must change our sense of self-importance and have a low estimation of our importance.

e. Cast your care upon the Lord (1 Peter 5:7). There are some things we simply need to give to Jesus to handle.

3. Strife separates people and puts up barriers between us and God, and between us and His blessings; He warns against letting it gain a foothold in our lives.

   a. A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle (Proverbs 18:19).

   b. An offended friend is harder to win back than a fortified city. Arguments separate friends like a gate locked with bars (Proverbs 18:19, NLT).

B. Strife gives the enemy opportunities to split us apart and destroy us. We must resist it.

   1. Pride can lead to contention and strife. Pride is an exaggerated opinion of our own self-importance. Strife does not enter in because of what others do to us, but because of the position that we take.

      a. Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom (Proverbs 13:10).

      b. Pride leads to conflict; those who take advice are wise (Proverbs 13:10, NLT).

   2. Strife drives a wedge between people. It destroys our unity, which is what the enemy is after.

      a. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! (Psalm 133:1).

   3. Strife is a trap Satan uses to take us captive. We must take an aggressive stance against it.

      a. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Timothy 2:23-26).

   4. Strife opens the door to the work of the devil in our lives. It gives him a platform from which to operate.

      a. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work (James 3:16).

      b. For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind (James 3:16, NLT).

C. Failure to handle anger correctly leads to strife. Faith in God’s love gives us victory.

   1. We must not let strife be birthed out of our anger; therefore, we must control our emotions.

      a. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath (Ephesians 4:26).

   2. If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn’t love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God’s secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn’t love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn’t love others, I would have gained nothing (1 Corinthians 13:1-3, NLT).
a. The enemy wants to lead God’s people into strife and out of love. Therefore, we need strong faith in God’s love for us.
b. It is very difficult to love others if we do not think God loves us.
c. We love him, because he first loved us (1 John 4:19).

3. Notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God: And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us (Deuteronomy 1:26, 27).
a. We rebel if we don’t believe God loves us; this puts us at risk of falling into strife.
b. People who cannot control their anger are weak. Avoiding strife strengthens us, because we must resist it.
c. Strife and discord weaken us, and divide us against each other.
d. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand (Mark 3:25).

D. There are six ways to avoid strife:
1. Build others up, and follow things that make for peace.
   a. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another (Romans 14:19).
2. Be of the same mind, so that we can glorify God together. This requires being in agreement specifically with God’s Word.
   a. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus (Romans 15:5).
   b. Can two walk together, except they be agreed? (Amos 3:3).
3. Have no divisions among us. The Bible should be the common denominator in our unity; we will fail if we try to replace that common denominator with anything else.
   a. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (1 Corinthians 1:10).
4. Bear with one another in love. We must learn to disagree agreeably while still loving each other.
   a. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:1-3).
5. Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit.
   a. Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind (Philippians 2:2).
6. Look beyond our own concerns to others’ concerns. When we do this, God will take care of our concerns.
   a. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves (Philippians 2:3).

E. An effective weapon against strife is to walk in love, so that we can do the right thing.
1. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise
blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing (1 Peter 3:8, 9).

a. This shows godly character. We must be motivated to do right because it is right, not because others may be looking. Doing this requires that we examine our hearts to determine if we are sincere in what we do.

2. Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them (Psalm 119:165).
   a. When we walk in love, we will not take offense. Love is stronger than any opportunity that presents itself for us to be offended.

3. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh (Luke 6:45).
   a. If our hearts are filled with the Word, then our mouths will not get us into strife.
   b. ...For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh (Matthew 12:34).

For more on conquering strife, click on the link to find the four-message series, *Success Against Strife*, in our eStore.


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Keywords: strife, deadly, hates, destroy, humble, attitude, peace, love