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The Three Battlegrounds by Francis Frangipane

Part One - The Battleground of the Mind

You will remember that the location where Jesus was crucified was called "Golgotha," which meant "place of the skull." If we will be effective in spiritual warfare, the first field of conflict where we must learn warfare is the battleground of the mind; i.e., the "place of the skull." Indeed, the territory of the uncrucified thought-life is the beachhead of satanic assault in our lives. To defeat the devil, we must be renewed in the spirit of our minds!

Chapter 1 - Satan's Domain: The Realm of Darkness

When Satan rebelled against God, he was placed under eternal judgment in what the Bible calls "pits" (2 Peter 2:4) or "bonds" of darkness. The devil and the fallen angels with him have been relegated to live in darkness. This darkness does not simply refer to areas void of visible light. The eternal darkness to which this Scripture refers to is essentially a moral darkness, which ultimately degrades into literal darkness. However, its cause is not simply the absence of light; **it is the absence of God, who is light.**

Thus Jesus warned, "Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness" (Luke 11:35 KJV). There is a light in you. "The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord" (Proverbs 20:27). You spirit, illuminated by the Spirit of Christ, becomes the "lamp of the Lord" through which He searches for a true Spirit-filled Christian. But when you harbor sin, the "light which is in thee" is "darkness." Satan has a legal access, given to him by God, to dwell in the domain of darkness. Thus, we must grasp this point: The devil can traffic in any area of darkness, even the darkness that still exists in a Christian's heart.

An example of Satan having access to the carnal side of human nature is seen in Peter's denial of Jesus. Peter's denial was satanically induced. Jesus had warned Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat: but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:31-32). Behind the scenes, Satan had demanded and received permission to sift Peter like wheat. **Satan had access to an area of darkness in Peter's heart.**

How did Satan cause Peter's fall? After eating Passover, "there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was greatest" (Luke 22:24). Evidently, Peter, the water-walker, who

was also the boldest and most outspoken of the apostles, prevailed. Peter, being lifted up by pride, was being set-up for a fall. **Pride caused Satan's fall, and pride was the very same darkness manipulated by Satan to cause Peter's fall.**

The trip wire that Satan used to cause Peter's fall was the disciple's own sin of pride. **Let us recognize before we do warfare that the areas we hide in darkness are the very areas of our future defeat.** Often the battles we face will not cease until we discover and repent for the darkness that is within us. *If we will be effective in spiritual warfare, we must be discerning of our own hearts; we must walk humbly with our God. Our first course of action must be, "Submit... to God." Then, as we "resist the devil... he will flee" (James 4:7).* When we see this verse, it is usually all by itself as a monument to spiritual warfare. However, it is in the context of repentance, humility, and possessing a clean heart that we find Satan fleeing from us.

Peter was ignorant of the areas of darkness within him, and his ignorance left him open to attack. But the Lord would ask each of us, "Do you know the areas where you are vulnerable to satanic assault?" Jesus would have us not be ignorant of our needs. In fact, when He reveals the sin in our hearts, it is so He might destroy the works of the devil. Thus, we should realize that the greatest defense we can have against the devil is to maintain an honest heart before God.

When the Holy Spirit shows us an area that needs repentance, we must overcome the instinct to defend ourselves. We must silence the little lawyer who steps out from a dark closet in our minds, pleading, "My client is not so bad." Your "defense attorney" will defend you until the day you die - and if you listen to him you will never see what is wrong in you nor face what needs to change. For you to succeed in warfare, your self-preservation instincts must be submitted to the Lord Jesus, for Christ alone is your true advocate.

We cannot engage in spiritual battle without embracing this knowledge. Indeed, James 4:6 says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." God is opposed to the proud. That is a very important verse. If God is opposed to the proud, and we are too proud to humble ourselves and admit when we are wrong, then God is opposed to us.

We must go beyond a vague submission to God; we must submit the exact area of our personal battle to Him. When we come against the power of the devil, it be from a heart in submission to Jesus.

Today, let us seek, inquire, and ask God to show us areas in our lives that are still prideful and proud. Let us not be ignorant of areas of darkness within us.