
Turning Wimps Into Warriors

By David Wilkerson

September 13, 1993 I was in the fourth grade when I first heard someone use the word "wimp". That was the name kids called Big Tom, the biggest boy in our class. Tom could have beaten up anybody. He was strong, husky, muscular - and he could lift almost anything. But he simply refused to fight!

Even the smallest boys in our class poked fun at him. And as skinny and frail as I was, I ended up defending Tom! He and I became good friends, But it was awful to watch him take so much unnecessary harassment. And yet it all might have stopped if he would've stood up and said, "I've had enough! I don't want to fight - but if you jump on me one more time, I'm going to defend myself. I'm not your punching bag anymore!"

But Tom never did that. Whenever those smaller boys picked on him, he fell down like a limp rag. Up through the fifth or sixth grade he was still being called "wimp", "coward", "sissy", "powder-puff." And the older he got, the worse the taunts became. My last memory of Tom was of a six-foot boy full of fear - always the brunt of some other boy's wrath.

You may be thinking, "It's good Tom wasn't a fighter. He must have been a "peace-loving boy." I'm not suggesting Tom should have dared others to pick on him. But Tom's problem was, he truly was a coward!

Beloved, it's time we Christians faced up to a sad fact about ourselves as well - and that is, the church of Jesus Christ is full of wimps!

When I use the term "wimp," I am not being sarcastic. I simply don't know another word to describe the spiritual cowardice sweeping through the church! I'm not talking about every Christian, of course. But the house of God today is filled with weaklings who are afraid of the devil and his wrath, who never stand up to him, and who are constantly abused by the powers of hell.

The Bible warns that in these last days Satan has come forth in great wrath because he knows his time is short. Indeed, he has brought his entire arsenal against God's people, trying to wear them down. He has sent legions of lying, demonic spirits to seduce and harass the church. And even now he is injecting into believers' minds all manner of lies, bringing guilt, condemnation, depression and fear.

So Few Believers Know How to Stand Up and Fight! With all the talk going on in the church about spiritual warfare, Christians still have not learned how to stand up to the enemy. We are pushovers for the devil!

I don't believe every misfortune that befalls a Christian comes from the devil. We wrongly blame him for a lot of our own carelessness, disobedience and laziness:

Your horrible nightmare was not of the devil if you went to bed with a bellyful of jalapeno peppers and a liter of Pepsi. You may think, "The devil harassed me all night long! I saw a herd of buffalo stomping on my stomach, their beady eyes laughing at me. It was hellish." No - it was foolish! That wasn't the devil tormenting you - it was your own doing!

If you stay up late watching sensual movies on your VCR, don't try to say the devil put that lust in your heart. You put it there yourself, by turning on the TV!

It's easy to blame the devil for our foolishness. That way, we don't have to deal with it.

But there is a real devil present in our world today - and he is busy at work! How else can you explain what has happened to multitudes of Christians? Many are nothing like their Savior. They backbite, gossip and complain. They are jealous, unkind, unmerciful, fomenting strife and trouble. They live year after year in bitterness, hatred, carnality and covetousness.

I know people in churches everywhere who swear they love their pastors - yet they listen to vicious gossip about them! They know their shepherd is giving his very life for them, week after week. Yet they let the gossip and half-truths rattle on and on - and do nothing to shut it up! By their silence they approve everything that is said - and that poison becomes planted in their own spirits.

Let me tell you something of Satan's strategy: If he cannot pull the Almighty out of His throne, he will try to tear God's image out of you! He wants to turn worshipers into murmurers and blasphemers. And every bit of gossip you hear, every tale told about someone, comes right out of the pits of hell!

Just as he sought to get at Job and Peter, Satan begs God to get at you - to sift you as wheat! But there are two things every believer must know when Satan comes in like a roaring lion:

1. Satan cannot attack you at will. God has put a wall of fire around each of His children, and Satan cannot go beyond that wall without God's permission.

God does allow the wall to come down at times - but under very limited parameters. He does this to produce unshakable faith in us, to train us in warfare and to prove His power and glory on earth. Yet with every trial we face comes this promise: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

2. Satan also cannot read a Christian's mind. Some people are afraid to pray because they think the devil eavesdrops on them! Others think the devil can read their every thought. Not so! Only God is omnipresent and omniscient: "I the Lord search the heart" (Jeremiah 17:10). "I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts" (Revelation 2:23). "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13). Only the Lord can read our minds and thoughts!

But Satan doesn't need to read our minds - because he can read our actions. He watches our footsteps, noticing where we go and what we do. He knows when we slip away to do something we shouldn't. He sees our weaknesses - and he injects lies to suit our deeds! He hears our conversations about how frail and weak we are - and he tries to frighten us over our weaknesses!

Scripture commands us to stand up, be strong and do battle against the flesh and the devil:

"Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong" (1 Corinthians 16:13 NAS).
"Brethren...be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (Ephesians 6:10). "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus"(2 Timothy 2:1). "Young men...ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2:14).

In this last verse, the apostle John was not talking to eighty-year-old, seasoned men of God. He was addressing young warriors who were full of God's Word! John was telling them, "Because you took a stand and believed His Word to you, you have won the battle over the devil. You have overcome the

wicked one in your life!"

Beloved, God's Word is not a "wimp Bible!" And our message is not a "wimp gospel!" God is looking for people who will be warriors rather than wimps. We are prophesied to win the battle - but only if we stand up and fight! Scripture says we are more than conquerors, totally victorious over all power of the enemy!

Old Testament warriors were mighty in battle against satanic forces. Scripture says they "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of aliens" (Hebrews 11:33-34).

But something is terribly wrong today. Too many Christians are weak-kneed, powerless - easily victimized, manipulated, humiliated by Satan! God has put in me a holy indignation against this lack of resistance, And I believe it is time we became victorious warriors, not cowering wimps!

The story of Gideon tells how God turned a group of wimps into warriors, And I see in this story four steps to becoming a fearless warrior against Satan:

Step One: You Must Get Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired! You have to become fed up with being held down by the devil - living low, depressed, joyless, empty, harassed!

The book of Judges tells us' "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord." and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel" (Judges 6:1-2).

Every year at harvest time, the Midianites moved over Israel's land with thousands of camels, sheep and cattle. These animals ate everything in sight, leaving Israel impoverished. "So Israel was brought very low because of Midian" (verse 6, NAS). Indeed, the Israelites were at their lowest point ever. They were driven to living in dark caves and damp dens, starving, scared and helpless.

Then something happened. It started with Gideon, and it spread throughout the whole camp: Israel got sick and tired of hiding in those dark caves!

Gideon had grown weary, exasperated. After seven long years, he was tired of the Midianites prevailing over Israel! I picture him on a mountainside, looking down at all the Bedouin tribes. He watched as warriors on horseback plundered Israel's villages, trying to kill everything in sight.

Gideon said to himself, "How long should we put up with this? They go through our land with no opposition. Nobody stands up and does anything about it! We're told we have a God who moved for our fathers. But look at us now - we're stripped, helpless. We live in constant fear!"

Sadly, this is a picture of how most Christians live today. The enemy has come in and robbed them of all their peace and effectiveness. He plunders their lives and families at will - and they give no opposition! Instead, they hide in some dark cave of depression and bitterness. And they simply stand by as Satan brings more calamity upon their homes. They have been brought low - low in faith. low in hope. low in strength. low in attitude!

That is just where Israel was. Yet something rose up within Gideon. And he said just what God was

waiting to hear:

"This has gone far enough! We serve a mighty, victorious God. Why do we go on, day after day, taking this abuse? For seven years we have hidden in these caves and let the Midianites roam freely over us, with no fight or resistance!"

I ask you - how low are you? How far down has the devil brought you? To the point of depression, bitterness, fear?

When are you going to wake up and say, "Enough of this! Enough of allowing the devil to rob me and my family! I'm sick and tired of it, and I will not live this way! God never intended this for me. And I'm not going to let the devil take anything from me anymore. I've had enough!"

God will not do anything until you are thoroughly disgusted - until you are sick and tired of being sick and tired!

Now, you may be saying, "Brother Dave, it was sin that brought the Midianites down on Israel. Israel was simply paying for their sin." That is true - they were suffering judgment for their idolatry. But Scripture also says the people then "cried unto the Lord" (verse 6). And that's just what God wanted them to do!

You may be thinking, "I can't stand and fight the devil, because I'm paying for my sin. I sinned - I failed God. All these things are happening because the devil knows he's got me!"

If that is true, then you have to do as Gideon did - cry out to the Lord! We serve the same God that Israel did. And if He heard Israel's cry in their idolatry, He will hear you in the depths of your failure!

The moment you cry out to God, something happens in the heavenlies. You may not be able to see it - but God already has begun to move on your behalf!

Step Two: Deal With Your Fears and Unbelief! Israel had fallen into idolatry. But their root sin was still unbelief, resulting in all kinds of fears! And God sent them a prophet to expose their root sin:

"When (they) cried unto the Lord because of the Midianites,..the Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel...I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drove them out from before you, and gave you their land; and I said unto you, I am the Lord your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice" (verses 7-10).

God was saying, "I commanded you, 'Fear not' - but you disobeyed and feared! Now I cannot finish My work until you have dealt with your fears!"

The prophet told them, "Look at you - a bunch of wimps, hiding out, afraid to stand up and fight. You've already given up. But you have a history of God delivering! He gave your fathers great victories when they trusted Him. And He has promised to deliver you too - yet you don't believe Him! He brought you out of slavery and defeated all your past enemies. Why do you now act like helpless cowards?"

Moses had instructed Israel: "Be not afraid of them...let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not

tremble, neither be ye terrified" (Deuteronomy 20:14). He was saying, "God is with us. And because He is present, you have no reason to be terrified. You are never to be afraid that the enemy will make you fall!"

Many Christians, however, are terrified the devil is going to destroy them. They're afraid they'll make a mistake or go back to their sin, and the devil will have his way. But that's a lie from the pit of hell! The Bible says you don't have to be terrified as you walk through this life!

When you hold onto fear, it becomes contagious. Everybody around you catches it! Moses sent home every warrior who was fearful: "What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart" (verse 8). He was saying, "Just go home and take it easy. Otherwise, you'll destroy the victory for those who rise up to do battle!"

When Gideon gathered his army, God also told him to send home every fearful soldier: "Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart.... And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand" (Judges 7:3). Twenty-two thousand wimps went home - all quaking in their sandals, afraid of the forces of hell! But God had said to Gideon, "I must have men of faith and courage! Tell these to go home and pray until they've developed a backbone."

God is speaking the same word to His church today. He is asking, "Why do you fear? Why do you sin by not trusting Me to bring victory to your life? I have promised to defeat every demonic power that comes against you!"

Yet some Christians will never change. They can't get along without their pet murmurings and complainings. They are hooked on misery! They sound like the worldly crowd - all their talk is of misery, misery, misery. It's all about divorce, cheating, family problems, job problems, heartache, sickness, who's in what hospital, whose kids are in jail, which husband is a drunken bum, which secretary ran off with which boss. Without their miseries, they have nothing to talk about!

Yet those who seek the Lord are built up in faith by hearing His Word to them: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). And here is God's Word to all who call on His name:

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.... They that strive with thee shall perish.... They that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought" (Isaiah 40:10-12).

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel..., To grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days" (Luke 1:68, 72-75).

God says you can live in victory and righteousness without fear - all the days of your life!

Step Three: Pull Down Your Besetting Sin!"Now the same night...the Lord said to him...pull down the altar of Baal which belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it" (Judges 6:25, NAS).

Gideon's father, Joash, had erected great statues of Baal and the goddess Asherah, made from huge stones. His reasoning was, "Baal has given Midian power over us, Maybe if we worship their god, he'll give us power." People came from miles around to worship there, including Midianites and Moabites, It was a powerful, demonic stronghold in Israel!

But God told Gideon, "I'm not going to deliver Israel until you get rid of this idol that stands between us. Lay it aside -cut it down!" So in the middle of the night Gideon "took ten men of his servants, and did as the had Lord said unto him" (verse 27). He took an ox and used ropes to pull down Baal and Asherah!

God is giving His church today the same message He gave Gideon: "I want to help you - but I can't when you don't trust Me. You're full of fear. And before I bring deliverance, you're going to have to pull down this stronghold, this besetting sin!" "Lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset you" (Hebrews 12:1). We are to pull down all strongholds of fear and sin!

Gideon pulled down demonic strongholds using a strong ox. But we have been given weapons far more powerful than his: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds...casting down...bringing into captivity..." (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

There is only one way to bring down your besetting sin: "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost... [He] is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 20.24).

All victory comes by praying in faith. This doesn't mean cold, empty prayer - but prayer in the Spirit, prayer that believes God to answer: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:18).

Beloved, God provides the victory for you as you pray But you have to keep going back to Him again and again, praying in the Holy Ghost against your besetting sin. Every moment you spend in prayer brings down another stone from your idol. Soon you'll see it weakening, getting smaller. And one day you'll wake up and find your stronghold is dead, gone - cast down forever!

Step Four: Learn to Stand Up to Satan on Your Own! You have to learn to right your own battles. You can't depend on someone else for your deliverance!

Perhaps you have a prayer-warrior friend you can call and say, "I've got a battle before me. Will you pray for me? I know you have power with God!" That is fine - but it is not God's complete will for you! God wants you to become a warrior! He wants you to be able to stand up against the devil.

God promised Gideon, "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man" (Judges 6:16). God told him, "I have sent you - I will be with you!"

But then the people of the city came looking for the one who tore down their idols: "When the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was torn down, and the Asherah which was beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar which had been built. And they said to one another, "Who did this thing?" And when they searched about and inquired, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash did this thing." Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has torn down the altar of Baal, and indeed, he has cut down the Asherah which was beside it."" (verses 28-30).

But where was Gideon? He was hiding - still unsure of God's promises, still wondering if God was with him! Gideon said: "If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all His miracles which our fathers told us of...?" (verse 13). And so it is with many of us! Jesus has promised us, "I am with you alway[s]" (Matthew 28:20). And yet we have not learned to stand on His Word and fight! Instead, we look at all our weaknesses and think, "If God is truly with me, then where are His miracles? Where is the evidence I'm strong? I'm still plagued by lust. My home condition is still the same. God, if You are with me, why haven't things changed?"

Things will begin to change - the moment you are fully persuaded that God is with you. That He speaks to you and that He will show you all you need to know!

Before Gideon went to battle, God gave him every necessary detail. He kept paring down Gideon's men until only 300 were left - 300 warriors out of 22,000 men! But those were all God needed. They came down upon their enemies from the hills, screaming, yelling, smashing pitchers and blowing trumpets. "And all the host [of their enemies] ran, and cried, and fled" (Judges 7:21).

Dear saint, God will show you how to get out of your problem. He will tell you how victory is going to come, and He'll provide you with every detail. But first, He says, "I'm going to wait until you're fully convinced I am with you. I'm going to wait until you put your trust in Me!"

And that is what a warrior does! He rejects defeat. He casts out every fear. He tears down his besetting sin through prayer. And, finally, he stands on God's Word -preparing his heart before the Lord to receive victory!

Dear saint, you are stronger than you think! Like Gideon, you may wonder, "How can I fight? I'm so weak, so inexperienced," But God told Gideon, "Go in this thy might" (6:14). "What might?" you ask. "Gideon didn't have any might. He was a wimp!" Gideon's might was bound up in God's word to him: "Surely I will be with thee".

Beloved, that same word - "I am with you" - is your strength! And you will receive that strength by believing this word is true - and by acting on it!

As surely as you know anything else, you can know God is with you. You can know His Spirit is all about you. No matter what the devil brings against you, you can stand in His victory and power because "God hath said"! That is your strength!

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