

## **OCTOBER 2018 DEVOTIONAL: PROTECTING YOUR SPIRIT FROM IDENTITY THEFT**

By Lori Shuck

Identity theft is on the rise. I've dealt with it recently, as have many others. The possibility of it happening won't go away, so it's best to accept it and armor up. Usernames and passwords are as big of a deal as door locks, guard dogs, and home security systems these days. But one's identity ultimately encompasses one's whole person. When my cell phone number was stolen, I can assure you, every part of my being was affected! (Just ask the girl at the bank who was telling my Social Security number, address, and phone number over the phone to the main office, while three other customers were standing at the counter!) I've been consumed with shutting the thieves down on every front and arming my accounts like never before. All that said, the most important component of my "armor" is not account-related. It's spiritual. *Spiritual protection is the consummate protection for the whole person.* Yes, complicate and change your usernames and passwords every month. But don't just leave it at that. Spiritual protection covers all areas, including cyber theft. God sees everything, knows everything. And, depending on how in tune you are with Him, not only can He *give* you all sorts of protection, He can even help you *recover* what the enemy has stolen!

"God, your God, will restore everything you lost; he'll have compassion on you; he'll come back and pick up the pieces from all the places where you were scattered." Deuteronomy 30:3, *The Message Bible*

So, don't leave Him out.

No matter how hard it is to remember, "the enemy" is not a human being. The enemy is the mean, ravenous lion, who is always seeking whom he may devour. The "Great Satan." And no, he isn't the United States. He is actually a spirit. And his kingdom workers are spirits. They are ruthless identity thieves and foul soul-eaters. And they must be fought in the spirit realm—where protection is paramount.

In such a life-threatening environment, wouldn't it be helpful to have a sound and trustworthy handbook on defeating the enemy of our species?

And, what do you know? That's just what the Bible claims to be! But it isn't just any old handbook. The Bible is a *supernatural* handbook. There's enough plain talk in it to keep any half-wit between the ditches, yet God *can and does* regularly cause verses to leap out when one is just flipping through it like a magazine or desperately begging for a verse in a crisis. The Bible tells many secrets about the enemy of God and how we can be victorious over him.

Here are three ways the Handbook offers to protect you from spiritual identity theft.

### **I. Put on the Armor of Light**

"...put on the [full] armor of light." Romans 13:12, *The Amplified Bible*.

Ephesians 6:13-18 lists the eight pieces of armor that make up the armor of light. I think Paul included this so that you would ritually put the armor on every morning, just like you put on your clothes. Each piece of armor coincides with a protective element for each control center of your spirit, so to speak. They are:

**The belt of truth**-The belt of truth is in the center and holds all the parts of your being together.

**The breastplate of righteousness**-The breastplate protects your heart with purity.

**The shoes of preparation in the Gospel of peace**-Your feet will only go in the right direction if you are grounded in the Gospel of peace provided for us by Jesus (*not* judging others, ostracizing others, or criticizing others. Blessed are the peacemakers.)

**The shield of faith**-The shield of faith quenches the onslaught of thoughts the enemy is continuously firing your way that are negative, doubtful, and worse. Doubt and outright unbelief are two of the enemy's chief arrow tips.

**The helmet of salvation**-The helmet of salvation protects your mind from fear.

**The sword of the Spirit**-a.k.a., the Word of God, the Bible)-The sword of the Spirit is your primary tool for discerning—dividing rightly between soul and spirit—which is similar to saying it divides between your little earthbound ideas and God’s omniscient ideas.

**Praying at all times with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit**-Praying at all times in the Spirit is like keeping your gas tank full. You will go precisely nowhere important without living in a continual place of prayer—constantly conversing with God about what’s happening moment by moment.

**Watching thereunto (unto what? The prayers of #7!) with all perseverance and supplication for all saints**-Watching thereunto or “to that end” is pointing back to praying all the time about all things in the Spirit. Watching implies actively believing for the answer to come—acting as a spiritual midwife to move it along—by encouraging and continuing to pray for yourself and other people until their answers come. Watchers don’t abandon a prayer until the situation is complete and God gives them a release.

“Therefore put on God’s complete armor, that you may be able to resist and stand your ground on the evil day [of danger], and, having done all [the crisis demands], to stand [firmly in your place].

Stand therefore [hold your ground], having tightened **the belt of truth** around your loins and having put on **the breastplate of integrity and of moral rectitude and right standing with God,**

And **having shod your feet in preparation** [to face the enemy with the firm-footed stability, the promptness, and the readiness produced by the good news] of the Gospel of peace.

Lift up over all **the [covering] shield of saving faith,** upon which you can quench all the flaming missiles of the wicked [one].

And take **the helmet of salvation** and **the sword that the Spirit wields,** which is the Word of God.

**Pray at all times** (on every occasion, in every season) in the Spirit, with all [manner of] prayer and entreaty. To that end keep alert and **watch with**

**strong purpose and perseverance**, interceding on behalf of all the saints (God’s consecrated people).” Ephesians 6:13-18, *The Amplified Bible*.

## **II. Get Rid of the Kling-Ons: Demons and Familiar Spirits**

Christians have got to start dialoguing about demons and familiar spirits if we are to ever grow up spiritually and get the protection our souls and bodies need. These beings are real, they torment the living hide off of sincere Christians who won’t or just don’t know how to take them on and out in the proper way. There are good books on this subject. I’ll list a few in the reference section.

### **Demons**

Jesus released every person He met who had demons in their bodies by commanding them to leave the person. He called demons “unclean spirits”. From the examples we have in the four Gospels, these spirits are restless, always looking for a body to live in, are able to invade bodies and control them to a certain extent—causing seizures, crippling, and hemorrhaging, for instance. They can also speak through the person they control. *They never do anything good for the host*. More than one can be in a body, as in Mary Magdalene’s case, who had seven (Luke 8:2), and the Gaderene man (Mark 5:1-16), who had a legion. There’s no exact number for “a legion,” as a legion of Roman soldiers “averaged about 5,000 fighting men, though it could have thousands more or fewer.”<sup>1</sup> But there were about two thousand pigs the legion entered after Jesus made it leave the poor Gaderene; so if there was one demon per pig, the man was housing around two thousand demons.

### **Familiar Spirits**

“Turn not to those [mediums] who have familiar spirits or to wizards; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God.” Leviticus 19:31, *The Amplified Bible*.

In Acts 16:16-18, Paul cast a familiar spirit out of a girl who had been following him for days, shouting constantly, “These men are the servants of the Most High God! They announce to you the way of salvation!” After he’d had enough of it, he cast the familiar spirit out of her. This girl claimed to be a fortune teller. There was also a witch of Endor, in 1 Samuel 28, who held seances through a familiar spirit.

Generally, familiar spirits seem to operate through witches, warlocks, wizards, and fortune tellers. They haven't lost much ground over the years, and evidently like to be *passed down* through families. They don't just predict the future or cast spells, but have a wide array of abilities and fetishes to offer to their hosts. They don't even need a formal invitation. Samuel, the last judge of Israel said,

“Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry.” 1 Samuel 15:23, *The Amplified Bible*.

It stands to reason, then, that a spirit wouldn't care if a person is smeared with the blood of a fresh sacrifice and chanting in a hexagram, or is just being rebellious and stubborn. Either behavior can be an invitation for a familiar or unclean spirit to join up with that person!

It's helpful to keep in mind that *a spirit is also a person*. He's not human and doesn't have a body, but he does have personhood: a personality, talents, likes, dislikes, that kind of thing. And if familiar spirits who specialize in telling fortunes and calling up the dead (or doing great impressions of them) like being passed down through families, why wouldn't other spirits, who specialize in depression, anxiety, jealousy, or murder like it, as well? Have you ever witnessed the child of someone who has died, taking on not so lovely characteristics of the deceased parent, when maybe the child didn't exhibit those characteristics before? What if this is a familiar spirit, moving on over to someone else in the same family who hasn't protected himself? If a woman has a spirit of depression, for instance, and she dies, wouldn't it be a lot easier for that spirit of depression to then attach itself to the woman's child or grandchild, instead of having to go out into the wide, dark world, looking for an unrelated host, which might anger spirits who already have “that territory,” or the spirit's dark master, because he doesn't like his workers taking any time off? After all, Jesus implied that Satan runs a tight ship (See Luke 11:15-26. This could be called the Strong Man principle. The strong man is organized, fortified, persistent, prefers to rest in a human “house,” (v. 24), and will bring in more spirits “stronger and more wicked than himself,” (v. 26).) If they do happen to be driven out of a person—as blessed Jesus was so fond of doing to them—then they're likely to try to get back in.

I have personally been delivered from burdens and maladies that could have cost a lot of money to manage with prescription drugs. Until I understood that my “sickness” was spiritual, I couldn’t get free. I’m not saying that every human malady is directly caused by an unclean spirit, but death and sin got into this world through the master of unclean spirits, so the apple won’t fall far from the tree, in any case. But just because a person might be housing an unclean spirit doesn’t mean he is a terrible person. It means he has a body and a heartbeat. And that he hasn’t defended himself from the fiendish identity thieves.

Whether or not a Christian can be "possessed" or just "oppressed," in my opinion, is really moot. Scripture implies that unclean spirits were living in the body or soul of the victim, not their spirit. The soul is the control center of the mind, the will, and the emotions. And if you’ve ever been the victim of spiritual oppression or known someone who has, you probably know that their uppermost desire is *to be free*—not to waste time trying to decide if the person is “possessed” or “oppressed.” Jesus never seemed to care one way or the other, but He definitely didn’t want anybody carrying these things around with them! King Saul was tormented by an evil spirit that caused him to be depressed, angry, and jealous. When David sang to the Lord in Saul’s presence, the spirit couldn’t stand it, and left. But when David was done, the spirit came back. Saul never got rid of it. It came back so fast on two occasions after David sang, that he’d barely finished before Saul had narrowly missed stabbing him with his javelin! (See 1 Samuel 18:10-11.)

### **Authority**

If our spiritual enemies prowl around, seeking whom they may devour, we’re going to need authority to defeat them. And that is exactly what Jesus gave to all His followers: *Authority*. He said to them:

“Behold! **I have given you authority** and power to trample upon serpents and scorpions, and [physical and mental strength and ability] over all the power that the enemy [possesses]; and nothing shall in any way harm you.” Luke 10:19, *The Amplified Bible*. (Emphasis mine.)

“The value of our authority rests on the power that is behind that authority. *God himself is the power behind our authority! The devil and his forces are obliged to recognize our authority!*

The believer who thoroughly understands that the power of God is backing him can exercise his authority and face the enemy fearlessly.

What is authority?

*Authority is delegated power.*

Policemen who direct traffic during the rush hour just raise their hands and the cars stop. These men don't have the physical *power* to stop the vehicles if the drivers choose not to stop. But they don't use their own strength to stop traffic; they are strong in the *authority* that is vested in them by the government they serve. People recognize that authority and stop their cars.

Paul told believers to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might (Ephesians 6:10). That means you can step out in front of the devil, hold up your hand, and tell him not to come any closer. Use your authority!” 2

Ephesians 2:5-6 says: “Even when we were dead (slain) by [our own] shortcomings *and* trespasses, He made us alive together in fellowship *and* in union with Christ; [He gave us the very life of Christ Himself, the same new life with which He quickened Him] And He raised us up together with Him and made us sit down together [giving us joint seating with Him] in the heavenly sphere [by virtue of our being] in Christ Jesus.” *The Amplified Bible.*

“Notice that the Head (Christ) and the body (the Church) were raised together. Furthermore, this authority was conferred not only upon the head, but also upon the Body, because the Head and the Body are one. (When you think of a person, you think of his head and body as one.)

*When we realize that the authority that belongs to Christ also belongs to individual members of the Body of Christ and is available to us, our lives will be revolutionized!” 2*

Taking back territory that unclean spirits have invaded works the same way today as it did when Jesus was on earth. A believer is full of the Holy Spirit, which is the spirit of Jesus. Jesus gave all believers authority over unclean spirits. So, the believer can tell the spirit to leave in the name of Jesus, by the power He gave them, as recorded in Luke 10:19, and they must obey. There is no reason to continue suffering. However, just like your physical house doesn't stay clean without maintenance, so it is with your spiritual house. Don't let the sneaky devils slip back in once you've gotten them out!

Remember, if you have an interest in learning more about this topic, check out some of the books I've listed below. Derek Prince is particularly easy to understand, as well as the Praying Medic. Never assume you'll know "just what to do" without praying about each case specifically. That goes back to the piece of your armor called, "Praying at all times in the Spirit."

Armoring up, getting rid of pesky critters, and utilizing the authority vested in us as the body of Christ gives us powerful protection in a world of unseen, destructive robbers. We have all the authority Jesus had when He walked the earth, temporarily divested of His power as part of the Godhead, but powerfully fueled by the Holy Spirit. He did it this way to be our Example of "what this baby can do" when we are surrendered to God Almighty.

He gave us His username, and it is: "IN THE NAME OF JESUS".

He gave us His eternally secure password, and it is:  
"Behold! **I have given you authority** and power to trample upon serpents and scorpions, and [physical and mental strength and ability] over all the power that the enemy [possesses]; and nothing shall in any way harm you."  
Luke 10:19, *The Amplified Bible*.

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