

Man2Man-2

Gatekeepers: The Giant Killer Edition

STUDY GUIDE

Lessons 6: Fire for Effect!

This season we've looked at several of the weapons God has designed for us to use against the giants. We then discussed why God would go to such trouble, that being, because we are his highly favored children thanks to Jesus and his sacrifice. We then took some time to shift our focus...reminding ourselves that in reality, none of this is really about the giants. It is all about the destinies that God has specifically designed for each and every one of us. Sure, the giants stand between us and that destiny. But they don't define that destiny...or us. Our focus is to go through the giants to our destiny. Everything we've learned to this point is to help us do just that.

But the fact is, the giants do stand between where we are and where God wants us to go. And they'll stop at nothing to keep us away from God's best. Their attacks are heartless, vicious, cunning.

This month we're going to deal with that. For too long, God's kids have assumed, even spiritualized, the call to just bear up under the burdens the enemy casts our way to keep us from our destiny. And while we are indeed called to endure, that is not all we're called to do. What else?

How about make the enemy regret he ever attacked us in the first place!

This is all about how we respond to the enemy when he acts to separate us from God's best. We don't have to be passive or powerless. Much to the contrary, we can actively work in power to make the attack then enemy meant to cost us, cost *him* instead.

This month we're going to discuss three things we can do when the enemy attacks that will make him regret the attack. Three things that will cost the enemy while adding to your own spiritual account. None of these three things are new to us. But much like we have religionized Fellowship, the Word and Worship when God meant for them to be weaponized, we have also religionized these three acts of power. God has bigger plans for them.

Think on the struggles you're dealing with. Don't let them define you. Instead, force them to convey you to your destiny. Make the enemy regret the attack and you'll see your destiny unfold sooner than you can imagine.

Week One: Pray for Effect

Few things in religion have been more religionized than prayer. This week we're going to look at how pumping up our prayers in times of attack can make the enemy regret he ever came after you and your destiny to begin with.

Let's start with what is commonly known as "The Lord's Prayer." But this time, let's look at it from the point of view of conquest...making the enemy pay. You'll find it in Matthew 6:9-13. Read it and answer the following questions:

1. How is your relationship with God characterized?

2. What was the first thing Jesus said to ask for? What does that mean?

3. Jump down to verse 13. How complete is our delivery from the evil one to be? What does that kind of delivery do?

Now, with that in mind, let's look at a couple of instances where prayer was pumped up and see what the results were.

1. In Acts 2, all of the followers of Jesus, about 120, were hiding out for fear in an upper room. They were praying. Read that chapter. What can we learn about the results of that praying? In what ways might it have made the enemy regret he attacked them and herded them into that room?

2. In Acts 4, the Apostles are abused. Verses 29-30 record the prayer they prayed as a result. What did they pray and what was the result? How might this have made the enemy regret his attacks?

3. In Acts 12, Peter was imprisoned and the church was praying. It is an almost humorous story, except it 'looks' a lot like us today. That being said, what did God do anyway? And what did it cost the enemy? (Note: be sure to include what happened in verses 23-24.)

There are many other examples of how pumping up your prayer as a result of an attack can cost the enemy dearly. The examples above have several things in common that we might want to inject into our pumped up prayers when attacked. Make some notes on what you see these prayers were inspired by, what they requested and what was expected (and did that matter?). It'll teach you how to pray!

Week Two: Praise for Effect

This will be a bit of a review of our Weaponized Worship study. This week we'll dive deeper into how pumping up our praise when we're attacked costs the enemy big time.

Psalm 22:3 is often cited when we talk about worship. One version says that "God inhabits the praise of his people..." Without question, the enemy cannot inhabit a space our God occupies. With that truth in mind consider the following questions:

1. What is one way to rid our 'spaces' of the enemy?

2. When under attack and we don't respond with praise, who may we be making room for? And how is that helpful, or not?

3. Read James 1:2-3 and then think back on how you typically respond to the challenges of the enemy? With James and Psalms in mind, what might be a better strategy?

How frustrating must it be for the enemy that is trying to bring us down when we instead turn his attack around as a reason to pump up our praise?! In the Old Testament, we see that God's plan for conquering Jericho was to send in the praise team! The power of praise has not diminished today. Let's look at how praise was used by the early church to make the enemy's attacks backfire.

1. Read Acts 16:16-33. What was the attack, how did the Christians respond and what were the results that had to make the enemy regret the attack?

2. Read Acts 3:1-26 and answer the same questions as above.

3. Making the enemy regret his attacks doesn't always make him stop attacking. But it does cost him. Do you want to make him pay? Then, consider how you might handle the attacks of the enemy going forward...and what you can expect.

Week Three: Participate for Effect

Some call it Service. Some call it Volunteerism. God calls it a blessing and we can't repeat the names the enemy has for it. For good reason. When we pump up our participation in the mission of Jesus' church, it costs the enemy. When we do it in response to his attacks, we advance Jesus' mission at great cost to the enemy. No wonder he starts wondering why he ever tried to keep a servant from the destiny his Master designed.

All that is great, but the question remains, 'What would God have me to do?' Let's look at two major motivations for service.

Read 1 Corinthians 12, paying special attention to verses 11 and 18. If you are a believer, this applies specifically to you. Answer the following questions:

1. Who has God personally packaged for a purpose?

2. By whom does he do this? _____
3. Think of your gifts, talents, interests...what recharges your battery. Then, using the list provided of all the service opportunities try to determine which might fit you.
4. If your package matches up with an area of service, you may be called to it. The first motivation is, "I can because I'm called." The question is, will you?

Now read Luke 10:30-36, the story of the 'Good Samaritan.' It is a story of someone who served, when it wasn't his calling. Let's take a look:

1. Who in this story was called to take care of the beat up man? _____
2. The Samaritan wasn't called like the others were, and yet he still helped. If he didn't do it because he was called, why did he do it?

3. Since it wasn't his calling, what he could do for the man was limited. But even though he couldn't even stay with him, doing everything the man needed, what did he do?

4. Consider and discuss: I can because I'm called vs. I'm called because I can. Then take another look at the list of service needs of the church. Are there more on the list you might be able to help with now?

Just like with Prayer and Praise, when God's people respond to attacks by pumping up their Participation, it costs the enemy big. Read Acts 5:40-42 and consider the following questions:

1. What happened when the enemy tried to shut them up?

2. The church continued to grow exponentially as a result. But isn't that the mission. Ask yourself, do you see participating in ministry as solely because the 'program' needs bodies or because the enemy needs his backside kicked? Which option is more inspiring?

When attacked by the enemy, trying to get you to pray less, praise less and serve less, what are you willing to instead commit to right now that will make his attacks backfire and him pay dearly to the glory of God?

Final Question: How can you use the other weapons we've already discussed, including the Word (promises) and Fellowship to help you keep that commitment...and your boots on the enemy's neck?
