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However, we are not exempt from troubles and trials in this natural world just because we are a Christian and can have these strong spiritual weapons. What happens when the root cause of our turmoil is confusing to us? How do we know if our problem stems from something biological or psychological instead? We are complex creatures, comprised of body, soul (*mind, will, and emotions*) and spirit, and it is often difficult to interpret a crisis or disorder as strictly spiritual warfare or as being more earthbound in nature or even as being a "test" from God.

In such cases, it is advisable to use all the proven resources God has provided. Effective approaches may include medication, a medical procedure, specialized Christian counseling, prayer, and in serious cases, the biblical anointing by a pastor (James 5:13-15). Fortunately, Christian educators and reliable researchers will continue to provide literature and resources to increase our awareness about a variety of solutions.

We all differ in our ability to sense the presence, power, personality, and purpose of supernatural forces of evil, but Jesus himself was the expert in the field! Not only was he tempted by the Devil and quoted Scripture to combat him (Luke 4:1-13), we know too that Jesus helped those who were suffering from demonic activity (Matthew 4:24, 8:16; Mark 3:22; Luke 4:41). Do you remember, for example, when he cast out seven demons from Mary Magdalene, one of his early followers? (Luke 8:2)

I don't find it strange at times to experience an "evil attack" against my own faith. However, I personally feel that most of the alleged opposition is not demonic. Satan is certainly not omnipresent, omnipotent, or omniscient! Rather, I acknowledge that we live in a fallen world and that I have this resistance in my old, sinful nature that causes me to go against my spiritual desire to be more Christ-like. (Romans 7:14-25)

Regardless, whether our struggle is against Satan, the world's corrupt system, or our own natural desires that are contrary to the teachings of Christ, we must wage war with our spiritual weapons!

A helpful guide for staying on the winning side of spiritual battles:

1. Be assured of your faith and be confident about who you are and to whom you belong. In other words, know and be thoroughly convinced about who it is that you believe (Romans 8:14-16; Galatians 4:6; 2 Timothy 1:12).
2. Submit to God. Repent of your sins, confess, and obey the Word of God on a daily basis (James 4:7).
3. Resist the Devil and he will flee from you. Put on the whole armor of God, realizing that no weapon that is formed against you will prosper, because your weapons of warfare are not natural, but mighty and powerful through God (James 4:7; Ephesians 6:10-18; Isaiah 54:17; 2 Corinthians 10:4).
4. And don't forget that the Devil hates it when you quote Scripture to him (Luke 4:1-13). Just say to him: It is written . [and then fill in a memorized verse you love!]

Bios:


Dr. Katie Brazelton, Ph.D., M.Div., M.A., is the author of the *Pathway to Purpose for Women* series, with her best-selling anchor book being translated into 10 languages. She is the founder of **Pathway to Purpose Ministry**, an international training vehicle for Christian women. For years prior to Katie's book series' launch in 2005, she was director of women's Bible studies, director of Golden Gate Theological Seminary, and a licensed minister, all at Saddleback Church. **Dr.**




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 SEND TO A FRIEND

Did the Devil make me do it?

As eternal beings created in the image of God, we have a stake in the raging battle between good and evil.

October 17, 2006 - by **Katie Brazelton** and Pamela Royster

Some friends and I sat down for coffee the other day, bantering over the growing list of "reality" shows. We recalled the wide array of titles advertised during last season's television line-up, including *Wife Swap*, *Survivor*, *Big Brother*, *American Idol*, *Supernanny*, *Fear Factor*, and *Extreme Makeover*, not to mention the crime shows and *The Dr. Phil House*. We decided that television entertainment keeps viewers in touch with their "very visible, in-your-face" existence.

Channel surfers and moviegoers, however, definitely have not lost their curiosity about the "invisible" world. Television viewers also have embraced drama series like *Charmed*, *Touched by an Angel*, and *Joan of Arcadia*. Many suspense thrillers like *Poltergeist* have reached blockbuster status in movie theatres, along with humor-filled science fiction comedies like *Ghost Busters* and *Men in Black*. And what about acclaimed mystical dramas like *Ghost* and *The Green Mile*? Countless millions of dollars have been invested in popular media to satisfy humans' curiosity about the spirit world.

Retailers begin gearing up in September, just after Labor Day, to meet customer demands for Oct. 31 Halloween celebrations. Stores are fully stocked with costumes, books, movies, and other products promoting witches, ghosts, and goblins. Then there is the controversial *Left Behind* series about the end of the world that has repeatedly topped best seller book lists, as well as the unrivaled, secular series about Harry Potter's magical tales. The overwhelming popularity of these two sagas, both in print and on screen, gives evidence that we are not just allured by the supernatural, but also by the age-old battle between the forces of good and evil in the unseen world.

At some basic level, we all have an interest in the world beyond. After all, we are eternal beings created in the image of our Eternal Creator, God. Theologians, laypersons, atheists, and Devil worshipers alike are intrigued with the invisible world of good and evil. A former neighbor was convinced that she actually was transported in her nightmares beyond the physical realm to witness the raging battle between good and evil. Even some of the most powerful rulers in the Bible were fearful and troubled in their sleep as a result of such unsettling mysteries (Genesis 41:1-8; Daniel 2:1-13).

As followers of Christ, we must remember that we are already on the winning side of the spiritual battle because our faith is set firmly in Jesus who conquered hell, death, and the grave by sacrificing his own life for us. Our spiritual weapons (truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, the Word of God, and prayer) have been issued, and we have been equipped and empowered to take our stand in the battle (Ephesians 6:10-18)!