

Complacency Kills

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In the whole issue of Spiritual warfare it is proper to remember something that we so often forget, and that snared several persons in both the Old and New Testaments. The illustration that follows is not quite that old. In fact, it happened while I was on active duty, and was related to me by a subordinate who was directly involved, though not by choice.

One of the strange things about my Air Force career was that I ended up with three specialties, and reached a high level of proficiency in all three. It really was not by choice that I ended up changing careers three times, except for the transition from logistics to avionics. What this meant was that I became intimately familiar with the Air Force training program and its processes. Without actually looking at certain paperwork, I know that certain things must be accomplished prior to allowing an individual to perform certain tasks. That knowledge bears heavily on understanding the event which occurred at Williams AFB.

While stationed at Castle AFB I had the privilege of training several individuals on KC-135 autopilot and navigation systems. As the Combat Crew training base in Strategic Air Command, we had an extremely heavy flying schedule. Thus we consumed people. One of those individuals we received at Castle was a young man that transitioned from Aerospace Ground Equipment (AGE) to Guidance and Control Systems. He was serious individual that was easy to train and conscientious about his duties. He also had a story to tell; one that was not so pleasant, and is a lesson for us all.

This Senior Airman (SRA) was stationed at Williams AFB as an

AGE technician. Part of his duties involved delivering requested equipment to the aircraft that needed it, for the performance of certain tasks. As he put it, there was nothing unusual about the particular day that he delivered a piece of equipment to a T-38 Talon trainer on the ramp. From the enclosed cab of the AGE tractor he could see the crew chief of the aircraft. He also noted that the aircraft was jacked up with one wheel removed for replacement. There was a wheel and tire technician present at the aircraft along with a high pressure Nitrogen cart used for various tasks on the flight line.

The high pressure Nitrogen cart figures prominently in this whole affair, thus it bears brief consideration. It consists of several high pressure Nitrogen bottles (3000 PSI) laid in a rack, four across and two or three high. This cart also has two regulators. One is for low pressure that will allow only 300 PSI. The other regulator is the high pressure side that allows the full 3000 PSI to be available.

Also, aircraft tires are not quite like vehicle tires. First, they are designed for high speed contact with the ground. They are also designed for high impact and extreme temperature changes. To help prolong the life of the wheel and tire, they are also filled with Nitrogen.

Pressurizing the tire was the task being performed by the wheel and tire technician when the SRA pulled his tractor past the nose of the T-38 and cut towards the wingtip in preparation to drop off the equipment. As he pulled his tractor past the wheel and tire technician and the Nitrogen cart, he heard a dull explosion and blood splattered across the cab of his tractor. At that point he stopped everything he was doing.

The subsequent investigation revealed that one critical mistake had been made. Unfortunately, it cost the life of the wheel and tire technician.

Without having to read the report of the incident, I know that certain things were accomplished, and that the individual who died knew certain other things that should have prevented this from ever occurring.

1. This individual had reached a certain level of proficiency that is classed as "skilled" in the task he was performing with the tire.
2. He had performed this task many times, both with, and without supervision. In all probability he had also been evaluated on this task for his proficiency and knowledge.
3. The Technical Order specifically directs every step of the task. Whether you are just beginning, or are the most highly skilled technician on the line, you must have the Technical Order open and follow it every step of the way. Regulations demand it.
4. That same Technical Order contains "Warnings" "Notes" and "Cautions" that inform everyone of things that will, or can occur while performing the task. Pressurizing a tire would have had a "Warning" prior to the step of pressurizing the tire, informing anyone of the fact that improperly performing this task could result in severe injury or loss of life.

The SRA informed me that the investigators found that the wheel and tire technician had improperly selected the high pressure side of the cart and had applied 3000 PSI to the tire while he was immediately adjacent to the tire. The results were predictable. The most devastating thing about the whole incident is: HE KNEW BETTER!

You know – it is not a stretch to apply this one to spiritual warfare: How many times do we know better, and still do it anyway?

It is evident that Solomon knew better than to take so many wives. It is evident that David knew better than to look upon,

let alone touch Bathsheba. It is also evident that David knew better than to number Israel. In fact he was specifically warned against it. It is again evident that David also knew better than to have more than one wife as well. Just what were the Lord's words against such actions, and when were they given?

When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me;

Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.

But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.

Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites:

And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them:

That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

(Deuteronomy 17:14-20)

Thus we find that the Lord had given specific warning about the very issues that snared both David and Solomon *before*

Israel ever even entered the land of Canaan, and long before they asked for an earthly king.

And what about Demas from the New Testament?

Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.
(Colossians 4:14)

Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.
(Philemon 1:24)

Just how long did one have to be in the company of Paul the Apostle to understand the dangers of following after the world? Demas was considered by Paul to be a fellow laborer in the Gospel. Obviously, Demas knew that friendship with the world was enmity with God. How could he miss "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." *(John 15:18-19)*?

The problem is, he didn't miss it. No, Demas knew what the Lord Jesus Christ stated. Yet, as we see:

For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. *(2 Timothy 4:10)*

I think the problem lies in the following:

We believe that all we have to do is maintain our doctrine and we will be okay. If we just get taught, and then hold fast, we will make it. If we really want to be a go-getter, we will teach Bible studies, or get actively involved in a ministry and that will help maintain our strength and stand in the doctrine.

Except that violates all the evidence of history. It also violates the scriptures and the construction used in scripture. By that I mean:

The history of war plainly shows that the best defense is an outstanding, well-executed offense.

Moreover, and more importantly; scripture states:

Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. (*Romans 13:13*)

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: (*1 Corinthians 9:24-26*)

Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? (*Galatians 5:7*)

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, (*Hebrews 12:1*)

All these plainly indicate that progression is to be made. That we are to be proactive in opposing this world. After all, to run (or to walk) means that one must necessarily move forward. In the case of spiritual war, in which we are all involved, it means to be on the offensive. If a soldier merely sits on the battlefield and simply occupies a patch of ground, he is not going to take any territory. Moreover, eventually an adversary will come along and begin to dislodge him from his position. This is a continual problem with individual soldiers and thus armies in peacetime. Since there is no active opponent, they get complacent and secure in their position, weapons and tactics. So when an active war erupts and they go to battle, they suffer needless loss as they were not really

prepared.

As all this applies to the church; we should understand the proper interpretation of the following verse as supporting what is previously stated: And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (*Matthew 16:18*)

Again, it must be emphasized: This is a war of deception. Satan does not want you and I to understand that we are really at war. And, if we do, he wants us to believe that merely maintaining our position will keep us secure and immune from defeat. He dearly loves it when we think we cannot fall, (or we do not take the possibility of falling away seriously) as he now has us in the perfect position to fall. It is the most difficult of things to keep in mind. After all, don't we know so much? How could we then fall?

It's quite easy – *complacency kills.*

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