

A Very Private War

by Dee Bowman

Throughout History war has plagued mankind. In every generation there are “wars and rumors of wars.” Wars are born out of conflicts between people. Sometimes they are national, sometimes civil, always personal. Like it or not, we are all at war. We fight wars against great odds sometimes. Sometimes the wars are more like skirmishes or border disputes. But they, too, are still wars. Internal struggles are some of the most intense forms of warfare.

We fight against ignorance. Not many of us know the true state of things—and even if we did, things change. So we strive to stay up. Ignorance has always been a bane to man’s progress. And all of us have some of it. No man knows much, “except as he ought to know.” Will Rogers had it right when he said, “We’re all ignorant, just in different fields.” Study is the offensive weapon against ignorance (1 Tim. 2:15). It’s necessary that we know God and His way in order to combat the stratagems of the Devil. We can hardly win a single battle if we are “ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor. 2:11). And so we arm ourselves with the panoply of God so that we are ready to fight when the times comes (Eph. 6:10-18).

Pride is one of man’s most pervasive enemies. It sneaks in when we are not looking—and sometimes even when we are. Sin started with it; it has ever been a problem for man. “Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18), said the wise man. And yet we only fight it back; we never really conquer it. Ironically, the recurrence of pride is often worse than what we just fought back.

It’s difficult to control pride. Humility is the answer (1 Pet. 5:5); but humility is hard—hard to get it, even harder to maintain it.

Spies are part of warfare. They sneak in and gather information to aid in defeat. They work on the inside. Two of the most ubiquitous of these insiders are materialism and indifference. Materialism wears the mask of success. Indifference masquerades as leisure time earned by hard work. In both cases, they spy out ways to defeat you. Materialism occupies you so with what seemingly are legitimate battles—battles like “making a living”—that you have no time to spend on the real war—building character. Indifference, on the other had, lulls you into apathy and thereby promotes inattention to what is really important. Both these actions are so well disguised that they seem appropriate, when in fact, they are eating away at the fibre of your enthusiasm thereby blunting your interest in what should be of greater concern.

We can overcome the battles of life, but only as we trust completely in our leader (Rom.

8:34-39); only if we are watchful and earnest (1 Cor. 16:13; 1 Pet. 5:8); and only if we hold out to the end (1 Cor. 15:58).

One thing is sure, however. You have to get into the thick of the battle if you plan to have the victory. You can't win by just standing around watching.