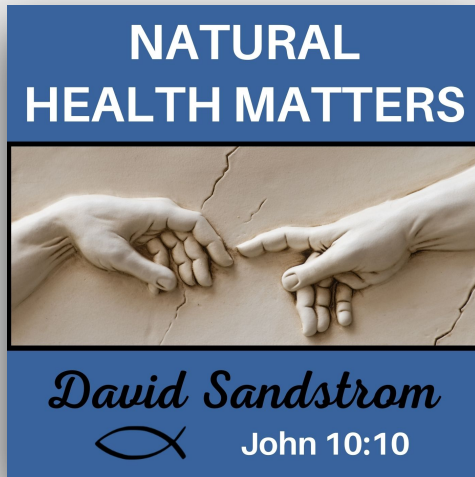


NHM - 57 Spiritual Health part 5 Spiritual Warfare and Health



David Sandstrom 0:00

Here's a sample of what you'll hear on this episode of natural health matters. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places. Ephesians 6:12 Welcome to the Natural Health Matters podcast where it's all about maximizing your health potential, so that you can pursue the abundant life more effectively. I'm your host, David Sandstrom, naturopathic doctor, and biblical health coach. This is episode number 57.

David Sandstrom 0:41

I wish I didn't have to include this episode in this series, but included we must. We can't talk about the spiritual component to health without covering this topic. If I were to leave this out, I'd be doing you the natural nation, a huge disservice. There's a great scene in *The Lord of the Rings*, where the king's advisors are suggesting that it's time to start fighting back against the oppression. And the king looks down intently and thinks deeply. And he says, I will not risk open war. And one of his advisors says, open war is upon you whether you would risk it or not. The point is, there's a battle going on and ignoring the battle won't make it go away. When I was writing my book, *The Christians guide to holistic health*. I thought about putting spiritual warfare as the first chapter. Because my book is about setting people free by sharing truth, and any move toward freedom, any move toward abundant living, any move toward advancing the kingdom of God will be opposed. As a result, I realized that when people open my book, the enemy will be right there, tempting them to dismiss it. It will be easy to say, I thought this was a book about health. What does spiritual warfare have to do with health? Which is the same question that some listeners may have right now. If you're having a thought that goes something like this, you know, this guy is getting a little out there. He's a little kooky. I'm not so sure this is for me. Be careful. That's the battle right there. Satan doesn't want you to hear this information, because it can set you free. So hang in there, there's going to be a lot of information in this episode. But I promise you, it'll be worth it. In fact, there's going to be so much information here that you may want to listen to this episode a couple of times, even down the road. In the future, you may want to

refer to this episode, because it has implications that go way beyond simply health and wellness.

David Sandstrom 2:43

Spiritual Warfare is more than just, for instance, a pastor being sexually tempted when he's alone with a woman in a counseling session. It's more than friction between people on a team that's starting a church plant. If you've made it this far into this series, you know by now that I believe that the abundant life should include vibrant health and vitality. John 10:10 says, The enemy has come to steal, kill and destroy, but I have come that they might have life and have it abundantly. Many people I've met are not even aware that Jesus breathed these two sentences in the same breath. Oh, yes, the life Jesus wants for us will be opposed. And any move toward freedom will be met with opposition. Spiritual Warfare is for everyone. It's much more daily or even moment by moment than most people think. And if we fail to practice it well, it can very much compromise our health. warfare starts in our spirit. It's fought in our minds, and it manifests in the physical.

David Sandstrom 3:53

Now here's an important point in our pursuit of natural and holistic health, it's peace we're after, not stress. God's plan for our lives and the instructions that go along with those plans will always lead to more relational connectedness, love, joy and peace, which are all health promoting. Satan's will for our lives will always lead to more fear, anxiety, isolation and stress, which will all serve to compromise our health. Another reason I didn't start my book with this subject is I didn't want to scare people off by giving them the impression that I'm some Chicken Little Christian that blames the devil for everything bad that happens. Satan's power and his ability to influence us has limits. He's not under every rock. He's not omniscient. He's not on omnipotent nor is he omnipresent, but he can't oppress us and bring us harm. If we're going to be effective in improving our health by pursuing righteousness, we must recognize There's a spiritual battle going on.

David Sandstrom 5:02

Every story has a villain, some character in the plot that's opposed to the hero's success in Star Wars. Luke Skywalker has Darth Vader. In the Terminator, Sarah Connor has a cyborg from the future. In the matrix, Neo has the black suited agents. Why is it that these storylines resonate so much with us? Because their story is Our Story. God has an adversary and so do we. His name is Satan or the devil. Be of sober spirit, be on alert. your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. First Peter, five, eight, some people have this picture of a harmless playful guy in a red suit with horns on his head. At best, this is not accurate. At worst. It's a dangerous deception. Satan is a

formidable enemy, and he's bent on our demise. I don't like this fact any more than you do. However, ignoring the battle doesn't make it go away. We have to contend with the villain. Notice the first sentence in the verse I just quoted calls for action on our parts. We got to be sober and alert. Satan is opposed to our success, and he's not passive. The life God has planned for us is meaningful and fruitful. However, we must face the fact that we will experience opposition. Again, it's worth repeating. The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy. I came that they might have life and have it abundantly. John 10:10. This is the backdrop for everything we do. The abundant life that includes health, wellness is not just going to show up on a silver platter, we're going to have to fight for it. This is not a physical battle that takes place with guns and knives. For a struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers against the world forces of this darkness against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Ephesians 6:12. It's a battle for our thoughts or better yet our hearts devotion. Again, it starts with the spirit. But it takes place mostly in our minds, and it manifests in the physical.

David Sandstrom 7:32

Lucifer was created by God as a beautiful and powerful angelic being. He was the head of the heavenly hosts Ezekiel 28:12 through 19. taking notice of his great beauty and position, he became prideful and wanted to be worshipped as if he were God. He convinced a third of the angels of heaven to follow him. And because of their rebellion, they were cast out of heaven. After his expulsion, Lucifer was called Satan or the devil. Trust me, he's not beautiful anymore. Satan hates God. And he knows he's outgunned. So he's concluded that the best way to hurt God is to go after its children. That's us. One day, Satan and his demons will be ultimately judged, and we won't have to concern ourselves with them. But that day has not yet come. For now. We've got to deal with them.

David Sandstrom 8:32

Through right living or righteousness would reduce our stress and therefore improve our help. We talked about that in previous episodes in this series, we must understand that the enemy is opposed to us making right choices because of his evil nature. When we're miserable, he's delighted. Keep in mind, he's intelligent and crafty. And he's planning our demise. Satan has come to steal, kill and destroy and he's not satisfied with part of our lives. He wants it all. The devil wants our marriages, he wants our finances, he wants our careers. And most of all, he wants our physical and mental emotional health. This is because he knows that when we're in a compromised state, we're less able to resist his lies and temptations, and he enjoys success, not us. 12-step addiction and recovery programs teach people to be on guard against halt situations. hlt halt stands for hungry, angry, lonely and tired. Someone recovering from an addiction is more vulnerable to relapse when they're in one of these weakened physical and

emotional states. Satan is well acquainted with our physical limitations and he'll exploit our weaknesses any chance he gets. He wants to take us out and the enemy knows we're more easily defeated when our health is waning. Satan's primary weapons are deception, and temptation. he deceives us and then tempts us to make poor choices that are counterproductive to our best interest. Of course, God wants the opposite for us. God wants us to understand the truth. He wants us to make productive choices that promote our health and well being. This is why the pursuit of righteousness or doing things God's way, is paramount to us winning this battle and walking in the abundant life.

David Sandstrom 10:31

Satan has each and every one of us in his crosshairs, and he's not smiling, worse, sitting ducks without God's help, we can't defeat Satan on our own. He can whip our butts with both eyes closed, and both arms tied behind his back. Now I'm aware that this all may sound more than a bit discouraging. And I don't want anyone to feel hopeless. But I do want you to be aware of the situation we find ourselves in. Ready for some good news. We can defeat Satan. But we need God's help. as followers of Jesus Christ, we've been given power and authority over Satan. Greater is He who is in you than he who was in the world. John 4:4. I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you, Luke 10:19. to exercise that authority, we must be obedient to God's word. Here's the critical point. When we fail to make the right choices, we give away our power and authority, and the enemy gets to have his way with us. submission to God comes before victory over Satan. Listen to a couple of verses. Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might put on the full armor of God so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil Ephesians, 6:10 and 11. We put on the armor of God by being obedient to his word. If we fail to put on the armor, we don't enjoy, quote, The strength of his might. Here's another clear teaching on this subject. Submit therefore to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you. James four, seven. Notice in both these verses, submission to God comes before victory over Satan.

David Sandstrom 12:30

We cannot expect to enjoy God's protection. If we don't listen to him, and obey what he says. We must be doers of the word. It's only through submission to his word that we put on the armor of God. We can't expect to live a life in opposition to the Word of God and then pray for the armor and expect God to provide it. God's made the armor available. But we have a role to play in this struggle. It's up to us to pick up the armor and put it on through submission to his word. Only then can we expect to enjoy the protections of God. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night. So that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For

then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. Joshua one eight. Please take notice. Our prosperity and our success are dependent upon meditating on the Word of God and being obedient to it. Again, we have no guarantees but this principle of blessing and cursing and sowing and reaping is seen throughout the scriptures. If we want to enjoy success in our health pursuits through the nurturing of the Spirit, we need to pursue righteousness. We need to repent from anything that hinders us and escape the devil's traps. Hebrews six one and 12 one. Listen to this verse, if perhaps God may grant them repentance, leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil. Second Timothy, chapter two verses 25 and 26. Remember, we're told that turning from sin is connected to healing from disease. Psalm 103:3 says who pardons all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases? Once again, we covered this subject in the last episode, Episode 56. But dealing with our sin, repentance and forgiveness comes before healing. In short, if we want to address our spiritual condition to improve our health, we must have the humility to say I don't have all this figured out. I'm not smart enough or strong enough to do this on my own. Therefore, I'm putting my trust in you God. We can only resist the devil by submitting to the will of God. Only then can we expect him to flee change for seven.

David Sandstrom 15:05

So, let's go a little deeper into how the enemy devises his schemes, and how we fight back. I want to be super clear on how we resist the devil. First John four one says, test the spirits to see whether they are from God. Satan is not omniscient, all knowing and he's not omnipotent. All Powerful, he has limits. How does he execute the plans he has for our demise. he executes his plans by offering up suggestions. In the hope that we'll come into agreement with him. We can see the way he works in the Garden of Eden. God gave Adam and Eve some relatively simple instructions. Satan came along and twisted those instructions and turn the truth of God into a lie. He basically said, God doesn't have your best interest in mind. You'd better take matters into your own hands, or you're gonna miss out. Adam and Eve bought into his lies, and it became their sin.

David Sandstrom 16:06

Although Satan is generally not channeling through serpents these days, he does have access to our minds by way of the Spirit. Let me explain. Most Christians would agree that the Spirit of God can speak to our spirits. Although I believe his voice can be audible. For the most part, God speaks to our hearts through our spirits. Some call this that still small voice. You may be reading a passage of scripture and a verse jumps out to you and you know, it's God speaking to you. Some people call this the rehma word of God. rehma is Greek

for utterance. Or you may have a thought or impression that seems to come from a source other than you. It's important to note that God's voice will never contradict his written word. Furthermore, God's voice is gentle, and it's never condemning. Satan has access to our minds and our thoughts as well. I know this sounds a bit strange to some. But remember, Satan and his demons are spirit beings. And there is plenty of biblical evidence to support this suggestion. We're gonna get into some of those passages in just a minute.

David Sandstrom 17:19

For now, I want you to understand that thoughts don't simply come from nowhere and float through the universe, waiting to land on someone. Ideas only have their origin in the mind of an intelligent being. This is an important concept and many are deceived on it. There are three sources of thoughts, human, God, and demonic. In Matthew chapter 16, we see Jesus teaching some essential lessons on the origin of thoughts. Jesus said to His disciples, who do people say that the Son of Man is they answered, some say, John the Baptist and others Elijah, but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets? He said to them, but who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus said to him, bless it, are you Simon bar Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my father who was in heaven, that's Matthew chapter 16, verses 13 through 19. In that passage, Jesus explained to Peter the first two sources of thoughts, himself, flesh and blood, and God the Father, my father who was in heaven. If we keep reading, the dialogue continues. From that time, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. Peter took him aside, it began to rebuke him saying, God forbid, Lord, this shall never happen to you. But he turned and said to Peter, Get behind Me, Satan, you are a stumbling block to me, for you are not setting your mind on God's interest. But man's, Matthew 16, verses 21 through 23. Jesus was basically saying, Peter, you're not understanding the source of your thoughts. That idea you just had didn't originate with you, it came from Satan. So in a single chapter, we see the three sources of thoughts, ourselves, God, and Satan. We may live in the 21st century, but we're not immune from this type of demonic activity. Although it's not likely to be Satan himself, but one of his demons. Remember, Lucifer took 1/3 of the angels of heaven with him when he was cast out. These fallen angels are now Satan's demons and they still have every bit of their Evil nature intact. What they want more than anything is to live vicariously through us. Their overriding desire is to train us to think, feel, speak, and act according to their evil nature.

David Sandstrom 20:17

So there's a question that's got to be addressed here. And that is, can a Christian have a demon? There's an ongoing debate as to whether or not a follower of Jesus Christ who has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit can be demon possessed? The short answer is no they cannot. The issue of ownership or possession has already been decided. First Corinthians 6:20 says this, for you have been bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body. Christ bought and paid for us with his life. Now, the Holy Spirit lives inside us. So for the believing Christian, the issue of possession has been settled. A true believer cannot be possessed. But we can be oppressed, or harassed or influenced, in numerous passages were warned to defend or protect ourselves from evil spirits.

David Sandstrom 21:12

Now, what about those teachings on Satan and his demons communicating directly with our minds by way of our spirits? One of those teachings is in Luke chapter nine. Jesus and his disciples were traveling through Samaria, many Samaritans held racist views towards Jews. As a result, Jesus and the disciples were not welcome there. Let's pick up the story in verse 54. When his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them? But he turned and rebuked them and said, You do not know what kind of spirit you are of but, the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Luke nine versus 54 and 56. Jesus was using a very similar tone to Matthew 16, when he said to Peter, Get behind Me, Satan. Again, Jesus was basically saying, You guys don't understand where your thoughts are coming from. Those thoughts are coming from evil spirits. We're told, do not believe every spirit but test the spirits, whether they are from God. First, John four, one. In the book of Acts, the early Christians were voluntarily pooling their financial resources. Whoever one couple, Ananias and his wife Sapphira decided to lie about the selling price of the land. Peter said and why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit. And to keep back some of the price of land. Acts five three is Satan can quote, fill someone's heart and motivate them to lie, then he must have access to their thought lives. This poor choice had tragic consequences for this couple. Satan really does want to steal, kill and destroy. We have another description of this type of direct communication taking place in the betrayal of Jesus. Judas decided to turn Jesus over to the Jewish authorities for a fee. Matthew 26:15. However, this idea didn't originate with him. It was motivated by the devil himself. During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon to betray him, John 13, two in the Garden of Eden, after Adam and Eve had sinned, it came time for them to hang out with God. Instead of meeting God at their usual hangout. They were hiding in the bushes. God quite obviously knew what had happened in where they were. However, for their sakes he called out, Adam, where are you? Adam finally got up the courage

to speak and said, I was afraid because I was naked. So I hit myself. God's reply was Who told you that you were naked? That's Genesis three verses nine through 11. For their edification, God was pointing out that there was another being doing the speaking. Satan is the who that told them. He's the creature that is not hidden from God's sight and Hebrews 4:13. He's the prince of the power of the air or the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience in Ephesians, two, two, Satan's method of operation or his mo has not changed. He wants to do the same with us. He is still offering up lies designed to tempt us into thinking, feeling speaking at acting according to his evil nature. Listen to this clear teaching in Second Corinthians. But I fear lest somehow as the serpent deceived Eve by his craft, emptiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. That's Second Corinthians 11:13. Not every thought we have is our own. We're told to test the spirits to see whether they are from God. First John four one. In the parable of the sower and the seed, we see Jesus teaching that the devil can come in pervert our thought lives. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. Matthew 13:19 we even see Satan having his way with King David's thought life. Quote, Satan rose up against Israel, and caused David to take a census of the people of Israel. First Chronicles 21 one.

David Sandstrom 25:49

With this understanding, we can make more sense out of the teaching from second Corinthians chapter 10, verse five, where we're instructed to take every thought captive. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. Second Corinthians 10, three through five. The speculations and the lofty things are the thoughts or suggestions that Satan and his demons offer up hoping we'll take the bait. The way we do spiritual warfare is by taking every thought captive. We must ask ourselves if the thoughts we're having our own. Are they from God? Or are they something more sinister?

David Sandstrom 26:49

Satan plays the ventriloquist. The tricky part is when demons are speaking to our spirits. It sounds like our own voice. Each of us has an inner narrator or self talk going on inside our heads. We must become intimately acquainted with the Word of God, so that we develop a sense of his will and his desire for our lives. That way, when a twisted light comes along, we could recognize it and reject that thought from entering the recesses of our minds. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and

we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. Jesus modeled this for us when he was tempted by Satan himself after 40 day fast in the wilderness. Satan said, if you are the Son of God, Jesus answered each time by using scripture. He took every thought or suggestion from Satan captive, he was able to reject them because he knew the Word of God. that's found in Matthew chapter four verses two through 11. You might be saying, hey, Dave newsflash, I'm not Jesus. I might not be capable of this. Need to remind you that God's word says that he will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can handle. Right after that teaching. in First Corinthians 10 five, we see this in verse 13. God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. bank tellers are not taught what every possible counter bill could look like. They're taught to recognize real currency. This way, when a counterfeit comes along, it's easy to spot. Satan is continually offering up counterfeits to the real thing. God has great sex planned for us in the context of a committed marriage relationship, the real thing. Satan offers us counterfeits with porn strip clubs and one night stands. God offers Financial Peace by living below our means and embracing generosity. Satan says you can have it now with easy credit. This sets us up for years or even decades of financial stress. God's word generally doesn't go into all the specifics as to what will happen if we're disobedient, usually just tells us to trust Him and obey john 14:15. If you love me, you'll do as I say. However, in this example, with finances we all know that living beyond our means with no financial margin is not a good idea. It restricts our freedom, enslaves us to the lender, creates marital conflict and produces all kinds of stress. Again, stress is our enemy when it comes to health.

David Sandstrom 29:49

We'll be going into more detail about what specific thoughts and behaviors we need to avoid or embrace to protect our health in coming episodes. Here's how this works. We've talked about the importance of thinking healthy thoughts and how those thoughts exert a powerful influence on our health for good or bad. Satan and his demons have access to our minds by way of the Spirit. Satan is an evil, fallen spirit being bent on our demise. He wants to steal, kill and destroy. He's scheming and developing a customized plan of attack. To accomplish his evil desires he uses lies. He's maximizing his leverage by seducing us into thinking health destroying thoughts. This serves his purposes because if he can wear us down and compromise our health, it's easier to render us effective for Kingdom work.

David Sandstrom 30:44

A helpful tool to determine the origin of a thought is to carry it out to its natural consequence. God's inspiration for us will always lead to more fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self

control. Not only that, God's thoughts will be centered around relational connectedness. They'll always lead to more love for God, love for others, and love for ourselves. All of this is health promoting demonic suggestions who do the opposite. satanic suggestions will produce more isolation, hurt, misery and stress. Remember, as far as our health is concerned, it's peace. whereafter not stress. You can take this one of the back, Satan suggestions if taken in will be stress producing. This brings us right back to pursuing righteousness. Satan desires that we think, feel, speak and act in an unrighteous manner. To maximize our health potential, we must be the gatekeepers of our minds, and not allow unproductive thoughts to enter. When an unproductive demonic idea comes our way that thought needs to be rejected. When Satan or one of his demons comes knocking on the door of our hearts with some type of demonic suggestion. We need to tell him to hit the road. That's taking every thought captive. That's how we do warfare. When we do it well, it protects our health. This process is much more daily, even moment by moment than most people realize. Most of us have unhealthy thinking patterns that have been in place for years, maybe decades. Our minds must be retrained or renewed Romans 12. Two, we are admonished in Scripture to cleanse ourselves. Therefore having these promises Beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Second Corinthians seven one.

David Sandstrom 32:48

Alright, so that was a mouthful once he can. So let's summarize. God has an enemy, and so do we. Satan and his demons are fallen angels, and they're bent on our demise. robbing us of our health is one of Satan's top priorities. Satan's primary weapons are lies in temptation. God's word promises protections, but those protections are often conditional. Spiritual Warfare takes place in our minds. Satan is a fallen spirit being any has the ability to offer us suggestions into our hearts and minds. There are three sources of thoughts, ourselves, God, and demonic. true believers cannot be demon possessed, but we can be oppressed by demons. We are called to resist the devil. Satan suggestions are contrary to God's desire, and they're always stress producing. God's suggestions, on the other hand, are designed to protect our health. Stress can destroy health, therefore we must take every thought captive. The pursuit of righteousness is an important component to our health and well being. Alright, I hope you enjoyed this episode. I know this was a tough one to get through was a tough one for me as well. But please understand, spiritual warfare is an important part of doing health and wellness holistically and naturally God's way.

David Sandstrom 34:22

If you know somebody that will benefit from this series, you know somebody that's interested in pursuing health in a naturalistic fashion, I would appreciate you sharing the podcast with him. If you go to my website,

DavidSandstrom.com on the player, the podcast player on each show notes page, there's a way to share the episode and you can also share it on social media. If you scroll down to the bottom of the show notes page. More, go to David Sandstrom calm. in the show notes for each episode, you'll find links to all the resources that were mentioned, as well as a full transcript with timestamps that you can download for free. In addition, I always include a content upgrade with each show which is a free download that is designed to help you go deeper with that subject. Once again, thank you for listening, and I'll talk with you next week. Be blessed.