

10 ENEMY ATTACKS ON LEADERS

For more than **15** years, I have studied the biblical reality of spiritual warfare. Many of my writings (e.g., *Disciplined Warriors*, *Putting on the Armor*) address this topic evangelicals have often neglected. I regret that evangelicals have been afraid of this topic, because the Enemy is nevertheless real.

Recently, a church leader asked me what tactics I've seen the Enemy most use against leaders. In no particular order, here are the ten most common strategies I've seen.

1. ENCOURAGING LEADERS TO LIVE IN SELF-RELIANCE

Most leaders are in leadership positions because they can lead. I realize that statement sounds obvious, but it's strikingly important when thinking about spiritual warfare. Because most leaders can lead, they are always susceptible to leading in their own ingenuity and strength. Creativity and strategizing trump prayerful dependence on God ... and the Enemy relaxes in glee.

2. DISTRACTING LEADERS FROM THEIR DEVOTIONAL LIFE

Regardless of a leader's position (whether church-based or secular), the Christian leader must lead from his knees. What the leader does when no one is looking — when he or she is alone with God in Bible study and prayer — matters much. At the same time, though, leadership demands focusing energy toward organizational plans and results. Who has time left for God?

3. DESTROYING THE LEADER'S FAMILY

Leaders tend to be task-driven more than people-driven. Rewards and recognition come from accomplishments rather than relationships. In fact, relationships are private and intimate, often uncomfortable for people who excel in the public arena. Leaders who lead their organizations while neglecting their families are not inviting spiritual warfare; they are already losing the battle.

4. ENTICING LEADERS INTO E-MAIL RELATIONSHIPS

The Internet is a marvelous tool for leaders, but it's also dangerous. It's easier to talk about intimate issues across cyberspace, and flirting seems less risky. After all, **"we're not even together,"** I've heard leaders say. The affairs that often develop, though, are no less damaging.

5. DRAWING LEADERS INTO SEXUAL SIN

Needless to say, this strategy is at times related to the fourth one above — though not always. Leaders are by nature hard workers, and they at times wear themselves down physically and emotionally. Relationships at home are sometimes strained by workaholic tendencies. That attentive person at work suddenly looks more attractive, and the Enemy's trap is set.

6. FOCUSING LEADERS ON THEIR KINGDOM

After all, leaders deserve attention and recognition, they think. They would not be in their positions were it not for their abilities and intelligence. If the organization they lead is not large

enough, or if their name is not recognized quickly enough, it must be time to start looking for the proverbial **“greener grass on the other side.”** The distracted focus then weakens the leader in his or her current setting.

7. ISOLATING LEADERS IN LONELINESS

It happens all the time. The leader who looks so relational, so **“together,”** so popular is actually secluded and isolated. Those who long to walk in his shoes don’t realize his footsteps are lonely ones. By nature, though, leaders often choose not to reveal their weaknesses, and they remain alone. Men and women who fight battles on their own are destined for defeat in spiritual warfare.

8. DIVERTING A LEADER’S ATTENTION AWAY FROM EVANGELISM

It might seem that this strategy relates only to church leaders, but I don’t think so. All believers, regardless of their position, are to be Great Commission Christians. Leaders, in fact, may have as much opportunity as anyone to influence others with gospel truth. The Enemy is not alarmed when leaders focus more on their own goals than on the spiritual needs of others.

9. ENCOURAGING LEADERS TO LIVE BY COMPARISON

Christian leaders have one person to emulate: **Jesus Christ.** It is the Enemy who directs a leader’s eyes to somebody else’s popularity, opportunities, and recognition. **“I don’t understand why he gets all the attention,”** the leader thinks, even if he never states that opinion publicly. **“I know I could do better if I just had the opportunity.”** The Enemy delights when somebody else’s fame becomes another leader’s idol.

10. CONVINCING A LEADER THAT FAILURE WON’T HAPPEN TO HIM

It’s not hard to do, actually. Leaders are often leaders because they don’t accept failure and defeat. Others may give in, but not a true leader. Here’s what I’ve learned through the years: no leader expects to fail, and few recognize their own dangerous steps in the wrong direction. They come to their senses only after failure has cost them much.

Leaders, how have you seen the Enemy attack? If you’re a church leader, how might your church family help you to fight these battles effectively? Tell us how we can help leaders win.

SOURCE — Chuck Lawless