

This Is War: Don't Be A Stumbling Block

(I Peter 5:8-9; Ephesians 4:20-32)

Introduction.

All medical personnel are familiar with the acronym HIPAA. That acronym stands for Health Information Portability and Accountability Act. It provides four basic functions or protections of an individual's medical information.

The one protection that most people are aware of is *the protection and confidential handling of protected health information*. Essentially, as a medical worker, you cannot reveal any medical information about a person without authorization. That protection includes not even acknowledging their holding of an appointment or occupancy of a hospital room. HIPAA is a big deal and can cost a person their career.

Sometimes, medical workers will unintentionally share information, which is just as significant of a breach. They mean no harm, they have no agenda, they just, through a slip of the tongue, reveal information. This too is unacceptable, but it happens.

Let me illustrate. Several months back I crossed paths with a social worker at Walmart. I knew one of her residents had escalated and want to inquire as to their well being. So, right in the middle of Walmart, I asked so how did _____ end the day today? The problem was I used their first name, but fortunately caught myself before saying the last name out loud in a public place. That could have been a violation of HIPAA.

The point is, I would have unintentionally reveal protected information, but nonetheless still have been guilty.

Sometimes, Christians find themselves doing life and are guilty of unintentionally being a stumbling block or

instrument of Satan in the lives of others. Although unintentioned, the consequences of such words or actions can have eternal effects.

The point of today's message is that believers must constantly be on guard that their thoughts, words, or deeds do not become an unintentional stumbling block or instrument of Satan that hinders another person from moving forward in their relationship with Christ.

Contextualize this sermon in the This Is War Series

Contextualize I Peter 5:8-9; Matthew 16

I. The Occasion for Becoming a Stumbling Block

Principle: One of Satan's tactics is to attack fresh on the heels of a spiritual success.

- A) Faith of a Gentile Mother (16:21-28)**
- B) Healing of the Masses (16:29-31)**
- C) Feeding of the Four Thousand (16:32-39)**
- D) Spiritual Growth (16:13-17)**

II. The Potential for Becoming A Stumbling Block

Principle: Unfiltered thoughts, words, and actions can cause you to be an unintentional instrument of the Enemy.

A) Peter's presumption (v. 21)

Note: Peter, like most Hebrews envisioned a revolutionary type leader as Messiah to deliver Israel from the control of the Roman Empire.

B) Peter's rebuke (v. 22)

Note: Jesus had just referred to Peter as a rock (a positive) now Peter was functioning as a rock of stumbling (v. 18)

C) Peter's error (v. 23)

- 1) We pursue personal agendas
- 2) We pursue prideful endeavors
- 3) We hinder God's plan in the lives of others or oneself

III. The Solution For Becoming a Stumbling Block

Principle: The key to avoiding being an unintentional instrument of Satan is to fully submit to the Father.

A) Total Submission Defined (v. 24)

B) Total Submission Illustrated (v. 25)

C) Total Submission Applied (v. 26)

Conclusion

In recent days, can you think of times that you have unintentionally been a stumbling block to others?