

APES IN THE CHURCH



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BACKGROUND TO 1 PETER 5:8-9

The devil is seeking to devour believers which is why we are told to be “sober and vigilant.” This means we should be alert and aware of the things going on around us. Satan wants to wreak havoc among the people of God that is why we must always be alert and aware of his schemes that can cause division. His ultimate objective is to devour his prey and in the church it is to destroy relationships.

WHAT IS AN APE?

The devil can use APES (Anxiety Provoking Events) to devour believers. An APE is an incident that occurs among God’s people that bring tension and anxiety also having the potential to cause division, hard feelings or bitterness between them.

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON APES (ANXIETY PROVOKING EVENTS?)

Lurking in every relationship are APES waiting for the opportunity to pounce upon unsuspecting victims to tear them apart.

Insensitive or Offensive Remarks or Actions (Prov. 15:28)

Differences of Opinions (Acts 15:36-40)

Being in Someone’s Space (Gen. 13:5-18)

Personality Clashes (Phil. 4:2-3)

WAYS PEOPLE RESPOND TO APES (ANXIETY PROVOKING EVENTS)

When APES attack, there are several ways one can handle them. Listed below are four animals and they can be compared to the way APES are handled:

SNAKES

These individuals are called snakes because they strike back and inject their venom into the other person.

SKUNKS

These individuals are called skunks because they spray on others by gossiping.

TURTLES

These individuals are called turtles because they crawl into their shell and withdraw.

OWLS

These individuals are called owls because they respond to the APE in wisdom.

HOW TO HANDLE APES (ANXIETY PROVOKING EVENTS)

The way you fight an APE is with another APE.

ACKNOWLEDGE

Speaking to the Church in Corinth concerning forgiving a repentant brother, Paul admonishes them to forgive him. Failing to do so would give Satan an advantage and then Paul says, "...for we are not ignorant of his devices (2 Cor. 2:11). Even if Satan does not cause an APE, he can escalate it or cause it to go in a bad direction, therefore we should not be ignorant of his devices. The first thing we have to do is acknowledge the APE. When it happens we should repeat to ourselves, "This is an anxiety provoking event."

PRAYER

James says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). When an APE occurs the believer should whisper a prayer within.

- "Lord, let me be filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit."
- Lord, give me the wisdom to respond in a way that pleases You."

EXERCISE (HOLINESS)

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1).

- Take control of the APE, don't let the APE control you.
- Take control of your spirit.
- Take a deep breath to calm your spirit.
- Bring to mind a meaningful verse.
- Respond in a way that pleases the Lord.