

## EXCERPT

IVP Books

### ***Defending Your Marriage*** ***The Reality of Spiritual Battle***

November 13, 2018 | \$16, 176 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-4550-7

## Praying Against Spiritual Forces

"He has a fever."

*Unbelievable*, I thought to myself as I listened to my wife's phone message. Last night our middle son felt a little warm, and we hoped it was nothing. No such luck.

"Could you swing by the pharmacy on your way home?"

You could hear the frustration in her voice. Her irritation was spurred on not only by an unexpected health issue but the fact that I was *still* at the office even though we had yet to pack. In the morning, my wife and I were flying out to speak at a marriage conference. It was an early flight and everything that could go wrong was happening—sick child, last-minute cancelation of a trusted sitter, and a yet-to-be completed deadline at work. The phrase, *everything but the kitchen sink* didn't seem so funny when we discovered later that night that our kitchen faucet was leaking *again*. The tension between us was high as we rode to the airport in silence.

After settling into our hotel room, we headed to the ballroom where the marriage conference was to be held to do a microphone check. We noticed conference volunteers walking up and down the rows pausing at each empty chair.

"What are they doing?" I asked the conference coordinator.

"Praying against spiritual forces," he responded.

His answer took me by surprise. After years of organizing Christian marriage conferences, the organizer took seriously the reality of spiritual opposition. He explained that the couples who would occupy these chairs have certainly faced many obstacles—sickness, travel delays, luggage lost in transit, unexpected financial pressures, and marital tension are all par for the course.

"Do we really think it's all coincidental?" he said laughing. "Satan will do anything to keep us from working on our marriages. After all, a Christian marriage should reflect God's love. We'd be naive to think Satan isn't targeting us."

Walking back to our hotel room I was flooded with thoughts. *Is it really possible that Satan is targeting people attending this conference? Could it be that lost luggage or marital disagreements are not as innocent as they seem? And, if Satan is targeting people attending a conference, then certainly he'd attack people speaking at the conference. Right? Was my son's fever, a leaking kitchen pipe, and the tension between my wife and me Satan's attempt to discourage us? How can I tell if it's just a leaky pipe or something more threatening? Doesn't Satan have better things to do than target my wife and me?*

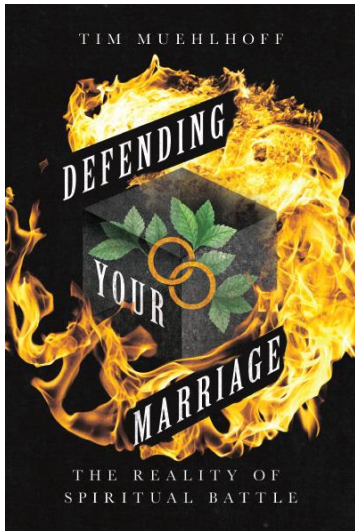


**Alisse Wissman**, print publicity  
800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or [awissman@ivpress.com](mailto:awissman@ivpress.com)

**Krista Clayton**, broadcast and online publicity  
800.846.4587 ext. 4013 or [kclayton@ivpress.com](mailto:kclayton@ivpress.com)

INTERVARSITY PRESS | [ivpress.com/media](http://ivpress.com/media)





## EXCERPT

IVP Books

### ***Defending Your Marriage*** ***The Reality of Spiritual Battle***

November 13, 2018 | \$16, 176 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-4550-7

Thinking biblically entails seeing the world through the eyes of Scripture. Most Christians attempt to order their daily lives to fit the perspectives offered by biblical writers. We acknowledge that God exists, so we pray. We accept that death is not the final act, so we live in light of eternity. We know that God's love is for all, so we seek ways to share Christ's message with others. We embrace the Scriptures as God's communication to us, so we read it regularly. Yet what about the reality of Satan? "On this topic," suggests New Testament scholar Clint Arnold, "some of us suffer a double-mindedness. Although mental assent is given to the likelihood that evil spirits exist since it is affirmed in the Bible, in reality it makes no practical difference in the way we live our day-to-day lives."

What would our marriages look like if we regularly sought productive ways to approach conflict, reclaimed our hectic schedules, carved out date nights, managed our finances better, sought to instill biblical values in our children, be Christian witnesses to our neighbors, *and* embraced the reality that we do all of these things while living in a spiritual war zone? "The Bible teaches not only that evil spirits exist, but also that they are actively hostile to all Christians; their perverse instigations adversely affect our day-to-day life and the lives of those around us," concludes Arnold.

-Adapted from the introduction



**Alisse Wissman**, print publicity  
800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or [awissman@ivpress.com](mailto:awissman@ivpress.com)

**Krista Clayton**, broadcast and online publicity  
800.846.4587 ext. 4013 or [kclayton@ivpress.com](mailto:kclayton@ivpress.com)

INTERVARSITY PRESS | [ivpress.com/media](http://ivpress.com/media)





**Defending Your Marriage**  
*The Reality of Spiritual Battle*

November 13, 2018 | \$16, 176 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-4550-7

Tim Muehlhoff (PhD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) is a professor of communication at Biola University in La Mirada, California, where he teaches classes in family communication, interpersonal communication, persuasion, and gender. He is the author of *I Beg to Differ* and *Marriage Forecasting*, and the coauthor of *The God Conversation*, *Authentic Communication*, and *Winsome Persuasion*. Muehlhoff and his wife, Noreen, are frequent speakers at FamilyLife Marriage Conferences, and Tim also serves as a speaker/author with Biola’s Center for Marriage and Relationships.

# What Happens When Your Marriage Encounters Spiritual Opposition?

What questions do you set out to answer in *Defending Your Marriage*?

**Tim:** First, why are we leery to talk about the possibility of spiritual attack in our marriages? As a professor with a PhD, am I embarrassed by the possibility of spiritual oppression? As a modern follower of Christ, might this embarrass you as well? I wonder what Jesus or the apostle Paul would think about our skepticism.

Second, what is the purpose of a Christian marriage? If, as Paul suggests in his letter to believers in Ephesus, Christian marriages are to be living metaphors of God’s self-sacrificial love (Ephesians 5), then is it not prudent to expect and prepare for spiritual battle (Ephesians 6)?

Third, if we do acknowledge spiritual opposition, how can we be balanced? How can we tell if an argument is just a difference of opinion between spouses, or something else? And, if the something else turns out to be demonically influenced, what are some practical steps we can take as a couple?

**We tend to shy away from talk about spiritual battles in our lives, but it is clearly a legitimate challenge, particularly our marriages. How do we know these attacks are real?**

**Tim Muehlhoff:** To believers at Ephesus, Paul describes three equally compelling influences that make devotion to Christ and others a challenge. The world, the flesh, and Satan are graphically mentioned (Ephesians 2:1-3). Paul informs believers that as they seek to love Christ and each other more deeply, they need to be cognizant of “flaming arrows” being launched at them meant to discourage and disrupt (Ephesians 6:16). To ignore these attacks will put Christ followers in a vulnerable position. Paul is not alone in his assessment. A quick reading of the New Testament shows that Satan was on the constant radar of Jesus and his followers. “Be alert,” cautions Peter. “The devil prowls like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8, paraphrased).

**This book is clearly different than other marriage books. What specifically sets it apart?**

**Tim:** *Defending Your Marriage* approaches the topic of spiritual oppression in a balanced and biblical manner. The following features make the book useful and easy to apply:

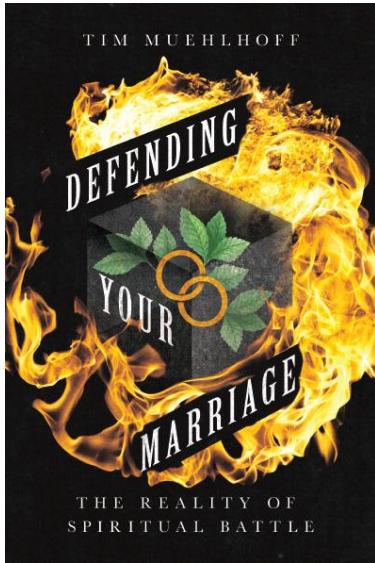


**Alisse Wissman**, print publicity  
800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or [awissman@ivpress.com](mailto:awissman@ivpress.com)

**Krista Clayton**, broadcast and online publicity  
800.846.4587 ext. 4013 or [kclayton@ivpress.com](mailto:kclayton@ivpress.com)

INTERVARSITY PRESS | [ivpress.com/media](http://ivpress.com/media)





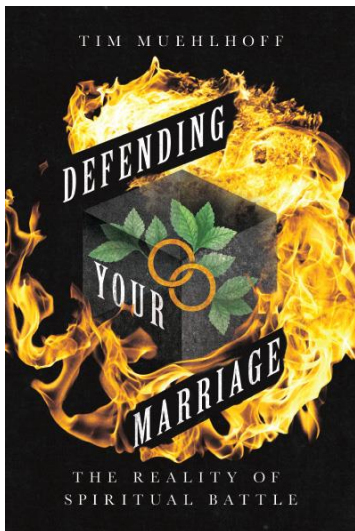
Q & A

IVP Books

***Defending Your Marriage***  
*The Reality of Spiritual Battle*

November 13, 2018 | \$16, 176 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-4550-7

1. Each chapter introduces readers to what Jesus and biblical authors have to say about Satan and spiritual forces at play today. Jesus did not merely talk abstractly about the reality of the devil; Satan personally tempted him for forty days in a wilderness outside of Jerusalem.
2. *Defending Your Marriage* helps readers understand what it is about their marriages that may invite spiritual opposition. By understanding God's design for marriage, readers will gain a better understanding of what Satan is so upset about and would want to target.
3. Couples are introduced to practical criteria that can be used to detect if spiritual oppression is at play. What are the most common indicators that Satan may be trying to derail your marriage?
4. *Defending Your Marriage* isn't merely a book about Satan. Rather, it's about how to protect our marriages by utilizing biblical tools such as prayer, meditating on God's Word, and mobilizing fellow believers.
5. Interspersed throughout the book are short interviews with Christian thinkers who have deeply walked with God. One of the great blessings of teaching at a Christian university is rubbing shoulders with individuals from diverse fields of study who can offer keen insight into spiritual battle.



## ENDORSEMENTS

IVP Books

### **Defending Your Marriage** *The Reality of Spiritual Battle*

November 13, 2018 | \$16, 176 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-4550-7

## “We Westerners Still Do Not Take the Demonic Seriously”

*“The vast majority of couples starting their marriages think that their marriage will take place on a romantic balcony, not on a spiritual battlefield. Tim masterfully unmasks the ploys of our true enemy and thoughtfully equips us to protect our marriages, stay on the offensive, and leave a godly legacy for future generations. Every married couple needs to read, discuss, and apply Defending Your Marriage.”*

**-Dennis Rainey, cofounder of FamilyLife Ministries**

*“Tragically, we westerners still do not take the demonic seriously, especially when it comes to addressing problems in our marriage. That is until now. As far as I know, my friend and colleague Tim Muehlhoff has written the only book that tackles this crucial yet neglected aspect of cultivating healthy marriages. I really can’t say enough about Defending Your Marriage. It is thoroughly biblically based and experientially sound; it is so well written that it reads like a novel, and it is chock-full of insights and practical applications. To be honest, I don’t see how anyone can afford not to read this book who is involved in marriage counseling or simply wants his or her marriage to grow. It deftly adds a new dimension to marriage protection and enrichment that you will find nowhere else.”*

**-J. P. Moreland, distinguished professor of philosophy, author of *Finding Happiness Again***

*“Tim Muehlhoff approaches the idea of spiritual warfare in Christian marriage by beginning with Scriptural teaching about Satan. He then moves on to discuss ways to recognize spiritual battles in marriage and offers wise counsel regarding simple and practical things couples can do to face it. Written with accessible language and illustrated with engaging stories and occasional sidebars, this book is as readable as anyone could ever want a book to be on any subject. As intimidating as the topic of spiritual warfare in marriage may seem to be, Muehlhoff’s approach is an unthreatening treatment of this long neglected but significant issue. No matter the current condition of their marriages—whether thriving, tedious, or troubled—Christians will benefit from reading this book.”*

**-Douglas S. Huffman, professor and associate dean of biblical and theological studies at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University**

*“The wisdom imparted in this volume will help you discern what is going on in your marriage and will give you important tools for handling a wide array of issues that have spiritual roots.”*

**-From the foreword by Clinton E. Arnold, dean and professor of New Testament, Talbot School of Theology, author of *Powers of Darkness***

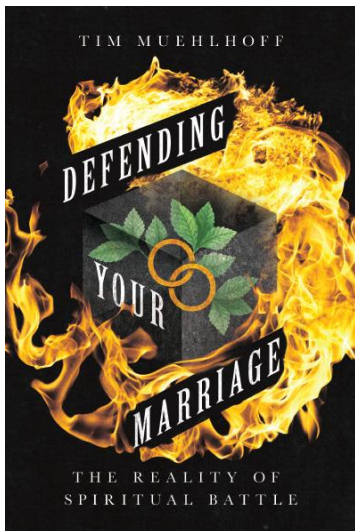


**Alisse Wissman**, print publicity  
800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or [awissman@ivpress.com](mailto:awissman@ivpress.com)

**Krista Clayton**, broadcast and online publicity  
800.846.4587 ext. 4013 or [kclayton@ivpress.com](mailto:kclayton@ivpress.com)

INTERVARSITY PRESS | [ivpress.com/media](http://ivpress.com/media)





## ENDORSEMENTS

IVP Books

### **Defending Your Marriage** *The Reality of Spiritual Battle*

November 13, 2018 | \$16, 176 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-4550-7

*"This is a desperately needed book on an overlooked topic. Defending Your Marriage is a sobering reminder of an invisible but very real danger to every Christian marriage—spiritual attack. When we fail to protect ourselves from this threat, we leave the backdoor open to forces that can erode our love, weaken our commitment, and even destroy our marriage. Thanks to Dr. Muehlhoff for identifying our hidden enemy and giving us plans for a strong defense, and for doing it in such a readable and engaging style."*

**-Tim Downs and Joy Downs, authors of *Fight Fair!***

*"I have known Tim for thirty-six years and I'm privileged to call him my friend. As a pastor, there's no one I would trust more on the issues addressed in this book. Defending Your Marriage is an excellent book, written by an even better man."*

**-William Radford, senior pastor at Bedford Presbyterian Church, Bedford, Nova Scotia**

*"As go marriages so go families and as go families so go communities, states, and nations. For many years the Adversary has stepped up his attack on marriages and families. He doesn't mind the okay, so-so, mediocre marriages where Christ is, at best, on the periphery and making no real difference in the couples' lives. But once a couple refuses to settle for a fifth-rate relationship and decides to pursue a Christ-centered marriage, to learn how to look and live and love like our Lord, the attacks of the Adversary can feel overwhelming. Tim has given us a unique, biblically based, relevant handbook for not just protecting our marriage but in the process actually deepening and strengthening our love relationship with God and with each other. This practical and long-overdue resource will help you become 'more than conquerors' and experience the quality of marriage that God has designed for those who love him."*

**-Gary J. Oliver, executive director of the Center for Healthy Relationships, professor of psychology and practical theology at John Brown University**

*"Defending Your Marriage provides deep truths, engaging personal examples, and helpful insights into an area that too few authors have the authority to tackle. This book will set a standard for others that follow on this topic, providing couples with amazing resources to help them defend their marriage."*

**-Chris Grace and Alisa Grace, founders of the Center for Marriage and Relationships at Biola University**

*"This is a must-read for Christian marital therapists! It fills an important gap in our training by providing practical tools for the therapist to acknowledge, identify, and respond to spiritual warfare in marriages. As a marital therapist I am often searching for ways to help couples that seem to not respond to traditional marital interventions. This book offers a new intervention: addressing spiritual warfare to help with the healing process for couples. I am excited that I now have a detailed map on how to address spiritual warfare in marriage beyond just naming it."*

**-Jana Anderson, certified Gottman method couples therapist**



**Alisse Wissman**, print publicity  
800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or [awissman@ivpress.com](mailto:awissman@ivpress.com)

**Krista Clayton**, broadcast and online publicity  
800.846.4587 ext. 4013 or [kclayton@ivpress.com](mailto:kclayton@ivpress.com)

INTERVARSITY PRESS | [ivpress.com/media](http://ivpress.com/media)

