

# **SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

**One of the big problems in addressing spiritual warfare is that many people tend to go to the extremes of either side. There are those who blame anything and everything on some kind of spiritual warfare. Then there are others who decide not to give it any attention at all, as if it doesn't really exist.**

**Both sides of that thought process are very dangerous and can have serious consequences if not addressed properly. Let's take a second to address the problem with this:**

## **“Everything that happens is some sort of Spiritual Warfare”**

**Some believers interpret every inconvenience, every disagreement, every bad day or every other car on the road is a direct demonic attack. The danger in that is:**

- **It removes personal responsibility.**
- **It can create unnecessary fear and paranoia.**
- **It distracts from practical wisdom and godly discipline.**
- **It can ignore some mental health realities, or poor decision-making.(Doing stupid things)**

**When everything is spiritual warfare, discernment just disappears.**

## **“It Doesn't Exist or nothing to worry about”**

**On this side, some Christians practically ignore the spiritual realm altogether. They may believe in the existence of it but live their lives as if it has no impact on them. The danger of that type of thinking is:**

- **Leads to Spiritual complacency (laziness)**
- **Results in a lack of prayer and vigilance**
- **Makes us vulnerable to deception**
- **Causes us to underestimate temptation and other tactics the devil may use**

**So, we are clear – demonic activity takes place every day in our lives that seeks to trivialize or normalize the darkness of this world.**

- A gentleman by the name of David Helm stated this exact problem when he said “Satan wants to make sin seem normal and righteousness strange”
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### **What Are We To Do?**

In terms of spiritual warfare, we are to go to the source to gain a better understanding of what is happening around us.

As Christians we do not build doctrine from speculation, television, or what Grandma may have told us. We go to Scripture. Our faith should never have its understanding through movies or TV shows or books about the bible (all have the potential to be really dangerous) but our understanding needs to come directly through the Word of God.

Like a wise general assessing a battlefield, we need to ask:

- Define the enemy
- Learn his tactics
- How to defend ourselves
- Understand the objective?

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### **Who Is Our Enemy?**

In basic biblical terms, Satan is:

- A created angelic being
- Who rebelled against God and fell from heaven
- And is now in complete opposition to God’s purposes for us
- 1 John 5:19 says the entire world is under the sway of the wicked one. That is why it is important for us to know we are Not Of This World!

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### **His Names and Titles**

Scripture gives many descriptions of Satan’s character and activity:

- Satan

- **Devil**
- **Beelzebub**
- **Tempter**
- **The wicked one**
- **Accuser of the brethren**
- **Deceiver**
- **Father of lies**
- **Ruler of this world**

**Each one of those titles reveals something about his strategy.**

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### **What Do We Know About Him?**

**From Scripture we can say:**

- **He hates God and opposes His people.**
  - **He is a created being with intellect and will.**
  - **He is not equal to God.**
  - **He is not the brother of Jesus which is a non-biblical teaching found in some other belief systems.**
  - **He prowls around like a roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8).**
  - **Revelation 12 describes a third of the angels falling from heaven with him.**
  - **Job 1–2 shows him appearing before God.**
  - **He can only act within the limits God permits.**
  - **He is not omnipresent. He can only be in one place at a time**
  - **He is not omniscient. He is not all knowing like God**
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### **What Does He Look Like?**

**The red-suited, horned caricature as he is often portrayed, is not in any way biblical.**

Scripture actually says he can appear as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). That suggests deception and not that he looks like a monster

Matter of fact, scripture describes him before the fall as the most beautiful of all creation. Ezekiel says he had the seal of perfection.

Because of that, it's important to understand some of his capabilities:

- Scripture DOES show Satan and demons possessing individuals in the Gospels.
- However, the New Testament NEVER shows believers being indwelt by demons, since believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

As long as we are clear on that, it helps us to produce sound doctrine.

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The question that we must ask is -

What does the bible say?

The primary passage is in Ephesians 6, which outlines:

- The nature of the battle (“not against flesh and blood”)
- The armor that is available to us
- The command to stand

The goal IS NOT to conquer Satan ourselves.

The goal IS NOT to charge recklessly.

The goal IS to stand firm in Christ.

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Many are familiar with this section of scripture whether we have read it ourselves or perhaps colored a Roman soldier in Sunday school depicting this section of scripture.

- **V10-18** Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with

the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

At the beginning of verse 10 when Paul says “*Finally, my brethren...*”, that word matters.

It signals: “In light of everything I’ve just told you...”

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- In chapters 1 – 3 Paul wants them to Remember Who they are

Before Paul ever tells them to fight, he tells them who they are in Christ. This is like a coach of a football team getting his players ready before the game.

To these believers living in Ephesus — a city saturated with idolatry, immorality, and occult practices — Paul reminds them:

- You’ve been redeemed.
- You’ve been sealed with the Holy Spirit.
- You’ve been saved by grace through faith — not by your works.
- You now have direct access to the Father.
- You are members of the household of God.
- God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that you ask or think

That’s not just good theology – He is telling them and us that it is our identity in Christ.

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- Then — in chapters 4 & 5 he tells them to Live Like It

You know your identity in Christ – put it into practice. He tells them:

- Walk worthy of your calling.

- **Be humble, gentle and longsuffering.**
- **Bear with one another in love.**
- **Be grounded in sound doctrine.**
- **Don't walk like the Gentiles.**
- **Put off the old self. (There should be a clear distinction between you (in Christ) and the old you)**
- **Guard your speech.**
- **Let your marriage reflect Christ and the church.**
- **Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.**
- **That verse is powerful:**
  - He doesn't say to "manage" darkness.**
  - He doesn't say to "flirt with" darkness.**
  - He doesn't say to attempt to "coexist with" darkness.**

**He says we are to have no – none - zero fellowship with darkness.**

**So, Paul is describing a believer who:**

- **Knows who they are.**
- **Lives it out visibly.**
- **Separates themselves from darkness.**

**If you live like chapters 1–5 describe...**

**You will face major resistance. Make no mistake:**

- **The world system (which the devil is in charge of) pushes against holiness.**
- **The culture pushes against the truth constantly.**
- **The hardest one of all - our own flesh resists obedience.**

**But as Romans 8:37 says, we are "we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."**

**That victory does not come from you - It is accomplished through Christ.**

**Now - When we choose Christ, Satan loses ownership of us — so he shifts tactics.**

**His tactics will then move to how he can:**

- **Steal your joy. \* Weaken your testimony.**
- **Distract your focus. \*Divide your family**
- **His mission becomes to make you weak and ineffective.**

**Now we are back at Ephesians 6:10 and 11**

**Paul says:**

**“Be strong in the Lord and in the power of HIS might.”**

**Who is the “HIS” he is referring to, church?**

- **It’s the Lord — the risen Christ. The one who defeated death and rose from the grave and saved our souls.**
- **Is there anyone stronger? No.**

**Not governments. Not culture. Not your flesh. Not demons. Not Satan**

**The strength required for spiritual battle does not originate in you.**

**That is why James 4:7 says to submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you.**

**I’m not getting in a fight with the Devil; I am going to resist the devil by submitting to God. If I am depending on my:**

- **Discipline \* intelligence \* willpower**

**I am going to lose.**

**But if I depend on Jesus Christ – I have won the battle before it even started**

**Verse 11: says to “Put on the whole armor of God...”**

**Notice — it’s not:**

- Your armor           \* Your personality
- Your education      \* Your experience

It's God's armor.

You cannot fight spiritual battles with worldly tools.

### The "Wiles" of the Devil

The word translated "wiles" (Greek: *methodeia*) means:

- Schemes
- Strategies
- Crafty methods
- Planned deception

Satan is skillful in his plans. He is:

- Intentional      \* Patient
- Observant       \* Strategic

He studies our weaknesses to find out where we are vulnerable

He exploits patterns. He repeats tactics that work.

Remember, he has had thousands of years to work on his craft.

We should also understand that the attacks do not usually happen head-on.

He likes to whisper to us.

He distorts truth.

He would have us doubt God's goodness.

**Verse 12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

- **Did you know our fight is against an enemy that we cannot even see?**
- **Martin Luther stated that humans do not see the intense, constant battle between angels and demons because we would be overwhelmed or terrified if we knew how active they were in our immediate surroundings.**

**The descriptions in verse 12 picture the dark spiritual powers.**

**It also shifts the focus from a personal struggle to a heavenly reality**

**“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood...” Paul clearly lays out the battlefield for us.**

**Our Fight Is Real — But Not Visible**

**Our enemy is not ultimately: A political party, the culture of the day, difficult people, or even with those who persecute us**

**They may be instruments that the enemy uses — but they are not the source.**

**Point being - we face an organized opposition.**

**Spiritual battles are not fought with: Anger, manipulation, politics, human strength, or even our own will**

**The weapons we have at our disposal are: Truth, prayer, righteousness, the Word of God and faith**

**Paul lists an army of forces that we fight against. The principal point being that our battle is against a well-organized unit that Satan has control over.**

- **We understand that it is a powerful force that we are talking about, yet Colossians 2:15 tells us that Jesus disarmed principalities and powers, that He triumphed over them at the cross.**
- **We can also use 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.....**

**He says they are mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.**

- **Do you know what a stronghold is?**

- It is a pattern of thinking that oppose the truth of God
- It's like a fortress, designed to block anything from coming in.
- In the context that Paul is using it here, it is speaking of how our thought life and mindset can have obstacles to the truth in it.
  - The battleground is often in the mind.
- We accept lies the enemy is telling us
  - Your past is so bad that you cannot be used by God
  - “I don't know enough to share the gospel”
  - “I can't remember scripture”
  - “Why fight the system, we are just going to lose”
    - It's what I call a mindset of defeat and it is wrong

That is why Paul follows that up with:

“Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God...”

Everything that we have talked about so far, is designed not to frighten believers —but to steady them.

A Christian should never accept defeat as final.

Not because we are strong — but because Christ is.

We need to remember; the results are up to God. He asks us to be engaged, to be bearers of light, to be truth tellers, to stand for righteousness.

That is the way Jesus lived His life, isn't it?

And because of that He was nailed to a cross

Did that result in defeat or victory? **VICTORY**

Christians are not fighting **FOR** victory.... (Hoping we win)..... We are fighting **FROM** victory. The battle has already been won.

We have to acknowledge that the fight we are in is very difficult.

I think we would all say that the Apostle Paul had a very difficult fight to bear.

When Paul pleaded for relief, Jesus told him:

**“My grace is sufficient for you.”**

**Grace is not weak assistance. It is the power of God that allows us to endure.**

**The enemy’s goal is not to own your soul — As we stated earlier - he can’t.**

**His goal is to convince you that you’re already defeated.**

**V13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.**

**Paul is relaying the message that being in the battle is going to be rough and we are going to need the right equipment if we are going to be successful.**

**The enemy is going to toss those fiery darts at you that say things like:**

**Your voice doesn’t really count**

**You might get hurt or lose your job**

**Your family is going to think you’ve lost your mind**

**You shouldn’t mix politics and religion**

**Do you really think standing at an abortion clinic is going to do anything**

**What difference does it make**

- **That kind of apathy or laziness is the reason we are in the mess we are in**
  - **Way too many churches have stuck their head in the sand, and these Pastors haven’t led their congregations towards righteousness.**
  
- **Next, we are to “Withstand in the Evil Day”**

**“The evil day” doesn’t necessarily mean one prophetic future event.**

**It can mean:**

**The day temptation strikes you.**

**The day pressure to sin intensifies.**

**The day you’re singled out because you stood.**

**The day standing actually costs you something.**

**Paul assumes those days will come. Not if. But when.**

- **“Having Done All... To Stand”**
  - **Paul doesn’t say:**
  - **Having done all, advance.**
  - **Having done all, conquer territory.**
  - **Having done all, win applause.**
  
- **He says: Stand. Standing implies:**

**Not retreating    Not surrendering    Not compromising**

**Sometimes victory is simply remaining upright when everything pushes against you.**

**This is why Paul spends five chapters building doctrine and identity before he ever mentions armor.**

**Because you cannot stand for what you do not understand.**

**Our enemy is not trying to make us heroes. He’s trying to make us silent.**

**He is hard at work trying to make us weak and passive.**

**V 14-17a Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; And take the helmet of salvation**

**All of us understand the Roman soldier with all of his equipment on.**

**He is prepared and ready because he knows the enemies tactics**

**We, as Christians are going to walk into the battle with God’s armor on**

**Truth, righteousness, the gospel message and faith and the knowledge of our assured salvation**

**If we have this equipment on, we will be able and ready when God calls on us.**

**V17b-18 and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—**

**Can you imagine stepping out into the most dangerous place on earth and you forgot your map and your telephone?**

**Do you know what the Word of God does?**

**Exposes lies. Destroys arguments. Reveals truth. Directs obedience.**

**Without it you are lost and have no way to communicate with headquarters.**

**Folks, this is why we have to be in our bibles**

**The plans of the enemy and our tactics are in there**

**Everything we need to know to be obedient, victorious believers**

**And of course, the access we have to God through prayer is perhaps the greatest weapon of all.**

**You can do all of the other things right, but we must listen to God for the right time to go, and the right time to be still.**

**Our Armor is not meant to be in Storage**

**Nor do we want to put all of this armor on just to sit in the house.**

**What a waste of good armor.**

**We should use the armor to defend:**

- **Our personal walk**      \* **Our families**
- **Our church**              \* **And the territory we already have**

**But that is not the armor's sole purpose.**

- **We need to use our armor to go on the offensive as well.**

- We can steal lives from the grasp of the enemy by sharing the gospel.
- Claim new territory by planting churches in unchurched areas.
- Shine the light of Christ in our cities and in our state to remove the darkness.

**And here is something I know in my soul — that every single time:**

**A sinner repents, A captive is set free, A mind is transformed, A church is planted,  
...darkness loses ground.**

**We have within US the greatest power ever known — the Creator of the Universe.**

**So go boldly, like David in the Valley of Elah when he faced Goliath where he said:**

**“You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.”**

**We want Philippians 1:21 to be true in our hearts**

**“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”**

**If I truly believe that — then I have removed the biggest weapon the enemy has.**

- **Fear.**
- **If living means serving Christ, and dying means being with Christ,**
  - **What exactly can the enemy threaten me with?**

**Many of us know Philippians 4:13:**

**“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”**

- **That verse is not about becoming a better version of you.**
  - **It is there for one clear purpose:**
- **You can do exactly what Christ has called you to do — because Christ will supply the strength to accomplish it.**
- **He equips whom He calls.**

