

Unseen War

Lesson 1

Ephesians 6:12

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

- The fact that a spiritual war exists seems to be more real in the minds of people today. The world has become very dark and even people who don't consider themselves to be Christians are seeing the effects of real spiritual warfare.

The Question remains what is Spiritual Warfare?

- Is it a battle against the world system, a struggle to bring heaven to earth and advance the kingdom of God? To create a God honoring culture that reflects the character of the Lord?
- Or, is it a battle against our flesh? The desire to rebel against God's commands and instruction for our lives? An internal struggle to be righteous and more like Jesus?

James 3:14-17

14 But if you harbor **bitter envy** and **selfish ambition** in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. **15** Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. **16** For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all **pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.**

1. The Bible tells us our world is fallen.
2. It is corrupted by sin and rebellion (Gen 6:11,12); not just of man but also of angelic beings (2 Pet 2:4, Rev 12:7-9). It is in a constant state of struggle: good vs evil, spirit vs flesh, God vs Satan. This constant

struggle is one that is meant to show the power of God (Col 1:16-17) and the beauty of redemption (1 Pet 1:11-13, Eph 3:10, Eph 1:4).

3. Spiritual warfare, like any war, has multiple battlefronts. In World War 2 there was Europe and the Pacific, in Spiritual warfare there is the world, the flesh, and the Devil. These are the primary battlefields our war is waged upon.

Question: What seems to be the core reason for Spiritual Battles and where do they come from?

Can these kinds of battles be inward?

Can it come from family or friends?

What about well intending people who just don't understand the wisdom that comes from Heaven?

- A Spiritual Battle can come from anything that operates in the wisdom of this world rather than the wisdom of heaven as shared in James 3

Spiritual warfare includes combatting the world system by creating God honoring culture. Yes, spiritual warfare includes a battle with our flesh. And, yes, it includes conflicts with the demonic. A biblical word view of spiritual warfare consists of multi battlefield hitting the believer and non-believer alike; coming from the world, the flesh, or the Devil.

Jesus gives us clear understanding of Satan's agenda in:

John 10:10

10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Question: What are some areas you have personally experienced a spiritual resistance or a battle?

1 Peter 5:8

"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."

Training for the Battles

A war is made up of individual battles and as soldiers we must be equipped for those battles in order to be effective. Each soldier prepares physically, mentally, and emotionally for combat. This preparation happens before the battle is even upon them. A soldier knows their life depends on being ready for the battle when it arrives; and training is the only way to ensure they are prepared.

Let's think of a few things a soldier must do to be mission ready:

- They must maintain physical and mental fitness through diet and exercise
- They must learn to use specialized tools and weaponry
- They must learn to function as a unit and train as a team
- They will receive mission briefings to understand the conflict and war zone they are to enter
- They will study mission reports that include dossiers on enemy combatants and objectives

Many leaders will give counsel that the spiritual battle requires you to read your Bible more, go to Bible study, plug in to church. These are all good things, but these are not part of combat, these are exercises in preparation for combat. This is training, not war. Even this study can give you the knowledge you need, but just like in our physical lives, you have to exercise your faith beyond training to be effective in combat.

Actual combat happens when you are hearing lies in your mind, being faced with temptations, experiencing persecution or oppression and choose to engage or respond in the Spirit, with truth and the authority of Christ.

As Christians, we need to both train for the battle and be ready to engage when the battle is upon us.

The Battlefield of the Mind

The Frontline of this battle is your mind. Negative or intrusive thoughts, temptation, doubt, shame, and attacks on your worth are often fiery

darts from the enemy. However the battle is not limited to mental combat.

The enemy's mental attacks have a purpose. Our thoughts lead to beliefs, our beliefs to understanding, and that understanding produces actions. The spiritual battle may begin with the mind, but it is a war that includes physical manifestation.

Addiction is an example of how mental attacks can lead to physical manifestation.

Stress, isolation, pain, peer pressure, all of these can lead to drug use.

So the spiritual battle most often starts as a battle of the mind but quickly progresses to physical manifestation if it gains a foothold. Paul commands the church to not give the devil a foothold by embracing sinful action.

Eph 4:26,27 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

But sin is not the only doorway for the enemy to influence and attack. Jesus committed no sin and was tempted by the devil in the wilderness. Job was blameless and was allowed to undergo trial brought on by Satan. Both of these scenarios seem to be more calculated attacks than opportunistic.

Sin can give a foothold, but a foothold is not needed for attack.

Why is this important to note?

The Key to Victory

The key to our victory, both individually and universally, is the power and authority of the risen Lord, Jesus Christ (1 Pet 3:22). As soldiers and ambassadors in the battle, we carry with us the authority of the kingdom we represent. The enemy we fight is powerful but he is nothing compared to the One who created the heavens and the earth.

The work of Jesus on the cross was a counter offensive against the ruler of this world. His sacrifice disarmed the enemy and redeemed that which was lost. His resurrection was proof of its success and a demonstration of its power to push back the darkness and once and for all conquer death (Col 2:15).

When Jesus ascended into heaven, He sat down at the right hand of the Father, and placed all His enemies under His feet. He promised the Holy Spirit would come and dwell within those who followed Him (Act 2:33). The same Holy Spirit that empowered the early church dwells within any who have given their life to Jesus. Through that indwelling Spirit we have the power and delegated authority to live a life of godliness, to stand against the attacks of the enemy, and advance the kingdom of God here on earth (2 Pet 1:3-4).

Luke 10:17-20

17 The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.”

18 He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. **19** I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. **20** However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

Key Concepts

1. Acknowledge the Battle

Everything in your life has a spiritual connection. Our battle is not about doing what is right or wrong, it's about being a messenger and force for the love and truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The enemies we battle are meant to stop that mission from being lived out through distraction, division, or destruction.

2. Acknowledge Your Enemy

The demonic is real and they have power and influence. A relationship with

Jesus is the only defense and assurance of victory. However, this does not eliminate our adversary. Over and over again the Bible warns believers to be on guard, stand firm, resist, and battle against the attacks of the enemy. Your enemy is real and it's not the person you look at in the mirror.

3. Acknowledge Your Authority

Every true Christian has been given the authority of Jesus through adoption into the body of Christ. Your authority to stand against the enemy is not of your own power but the power and authority given by Jesus as He has made you a new creation.

4. Asses the Battlefields

The world, the flesh, the devil. These are the three fronts of the war. As we battle each day it is important to be prepared to defend against attacks that stem from each of these fronts. The process begins by identifying attacks. As we progress we will be able to identify the source of attacks and respond accordingly.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father (John 1:12-13), I thank you for Your amazing love, protection, and grace in my life (Rom 8:35-39). I proclaim my utter dependance on You (John 15:5) and acknowledge that You alone are all-powerful, and all-knowing (Isa 40:28). You have all-authority in heaven and earth and over all Your enemies and the kingdom of darkness (Matt 28:18).

I now willingly submit myself to You and Your plans and trust in the name and power of the risen Lord, Jesus Christ (Col 2:10), Who has cleansed and bought me with His precious blood (1 Cor 19-20). I ask that You, by the counsel of the Holy Spirit (Eph 2:18), would bring to my remembrance any distracting, divisive, or destructive evil lies present in my mind, thoughts, heart, or life that is opposed to You and Your truth (John 14:26, 16:7-11). I confess it now and repent of my part, (if any), in all its wrongdoings (1 John 1:9).

In the name, power, and authority of the Risen Lord, Jesus Christ (Eph 1:20-23) - if there be any unclean spirit and demonic plot against me or the ground that I occupy (2 Cor 10:4), you must release your hold on me and be bound (Matt 12:29); you must leave and go to the dry place (Matt 12:43) of Jesus's choosing, your assignment here is now broken. What is bound on earth is bound in heaven, and what is loosed on earth is loosed in heaven (Matt 16:18-19).

Jesus has placed me in Him and put His Holy Spirit in me. He has seated me in heavenly places with Him (Eph 2:6), and sat down at the right hand of the Father who has placed all His enemies under His feet (Eph 1:20-23). No enemy is allowed to harm or hinder me in any way (1 John 5:18) as I seek to do the Father's will in my life (Eph 1:5-10). Jesus has sworn to protect me and commission me. I belong and represent Him (Eph 2:10, Matt 28:18-20).

Heavenly Father, I ask that You would fill me with Your Holy Spirit and lead me into all truth, wisdom, strength, and courage as You teach me to fight the good fight (1 Tim 6:11-14). I ask that you would cancel any ground in my life that I have given to the enemy, both knowingly and unknowingly (2 Tim 4:18). I ask that You would fortify those areas of my life, and the sphere of my influence (Acts 1:8), by filling it with the power of Your Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 1:7). Open the eyes of my understanding and make me sensitive to, and bold in, the leading of Your Holy Spirit (Eph 1:17-19).

In the mighty name of Jesus I pray, Amen (2 Cor 1:20).