

## “A Man of War”

### Summary

This powerful message confronts us with a dimension of Jesus we often overlook: Jesus as a man of war. Drawing from Mark 4:41 where the disciples ask 'What manner of man is this?', we're challenged to see Jesus not just as the gentle shepherd, but as the Commander of heaven's armies. The war we're in didn't start recently—it began in Genesis 3:15 when God declared enmity between the serpent's seed and the woman's seed. This is fundamentally a spiritual conflict between light and darkness, though it manifests in physical realities. The Christmas story itself is reframed as a declaration of war: 'For unto us a child is born' means God sent His Son to dislodge every opposing kingdom. Isaiah 9 reveals that for His government to increase, other governments must decrease. We're called to pray 'Your kingdom come' understanding this is a petition for God's rule to overturn all darkness. The message navigates the tension between Jesus teaching us to turn the other cheek while simultaneously being described in Revelation 19 as riding a white horse, making war with a sword from His mouth. Our weapons are spiritual—the armor of God, the sword of the Spirit, bold proclamation of the gospel. Yet we must maintain the right spirit: our warfare must always be motivated by saving life, not destroying it. When James and John wanted to call down fire on those who rejected Jesus, He rebuked them saying 'you do not know what manner of spirit you are of.' This reminds us that zeal without the right heart can lead us astray. We're living in an hour where God is revealing Himself afresh to His people, recalibrating us like He did Joshua—showing us He's the true Commander and our strategies must flow from worship and awe of Him.

# Small Group Study Guide – A Man of War

## Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by asking God to give wisdom, understanding, and grace as you discuss difficult topics about spiritual warfare and Jesus as a man of war.

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## Ice Breaker Question

What comes to mind when you think of the word "war"? How does that relate (or not relate) to your understanding of Jesus?

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## Key Takeaways

### 1. We Are Currently at War

- The war began in Genesis 3:15 with enmity between the seed of the woman and the serpent
- This is primarily a spiritual war with natural manifestations
- Christmas was a declaration of war against darkness

### 2. Jesus Is a Man of War

- Matthew 10:34 - "I did not come to bring peace, but a sword"
- Revelation 19:11 - He "judges and makes war" in righteousness
- Joshua 5:13-15 - Jesus appeared as "Commander of the army of the Lord"

### 3. The Nature of Godly Warfare

- The ultimate goal is to save lives, not destroy them
- We fight against spiritual forces, not flesh and blood (Ephesians 6:12)
- The spirit in which we fight matters (Luke 9:51-56)

### 4. Our Weapons Are Spiritual

- The sword of the Spirit (God's Word)
- Prayer and intercession
- The armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18)
- Worship creates an environment for strategic direction

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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Battle

1. **Read Genesis 3:15 and Isaiah 9:2-7.** How does understanding Christmas as a "declaration of war" change your perspective on the birth of Jesus?
2. **The sermon stated: "For the increase of His government to occur, there has to be a decrease of every other government."** What does this mean practically? What "governments" (systems, ideologies, strongholds) need to decrease in your own life?
3. **Read Ephesians 6:12.** Why is it important to recognize that our battle is spiritual first, not physical? How does misidentifying our enemy affect how we respond to challenges?

### The Character of Jesus as Warrior

4. **How do you reconcile Jesus as the "Prince of Peace" with Jesus as a "man of war"?** What does this dual nature teach us about God's character?
5. **Read Luke 9:51-56.** Jesus rebuked James and John for wanting to call down fire on those who rejected Him. What does this teach us about the "spirit" in which we should engage in spiritual warfare?
6. **The sermon mentioned: "If warfare doesn't have the ultimate motive to save life, it's not godly warfare."** How does this principle help us evaluate our attitudes toward conflicts (spiritual, relational, or even national)?

### Personal Application

7. **Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.** What "strongholds" might need to be torn down in your thinking? What arguments or high things are exalting themselves against the knowledge of God in your life?
8. **The sermon emphasized that "everything is working together to conform you to the image of the Son."** How does viewing your current struggles as part of this spiritual war change your perspective on them?
9. **Read Romans 13:1-7.** How do we balance honoring God-ordained authority while also recognizing that our ultimate allegiance is to God's kingdom?

### Strategic Engagement

10. **The sermon mentioned that Joshua received strategy in a place of worship.** How can we cultivate worship as a place where we receive divine direction for the battles we face?
11. **Read Nehemiah 4:7-9, 13-14.** Nehemiah both prayed AND set a watch. How do we balance spiritual weapons (prayer, worship) with practical action?
12. **2 Timothy 2:3-4 calls us to "endure hardship as a good soldier" and not to "entangle himself with the affairs of this life."** What distractions might be keeping you from being an effective soldier in God's army?

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## Practical Applications

### This Week's Challenge:

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

- 1. Put on the Armor Daily**
  - Each morning, intentionally "put on" each piece of armor from Ephesians 6:14-18
  - Pray specifically over each piece and what it represents in your life
- 2. Identify Your Strongholds**
  - Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal one "stronghold" in your thinking
  - Find three Scripture verses that speak truth against that lie
  - Memorize and declare them daily
- 3. Pray for Those in Authority**
  - Make a list of leaders (governmental, military, law enforcement, church)
  - Pray for them daily, recognizing them as "God's ministers"
  - Ask God to give them wisdom and to remove corruption
- 4. Examine Your Spirit**
  - Before engaging in any conflict this week (even small ones), pause and ask: "What spirit am I operating in?"
  - Ask: "Is my motive to save life or to win/be right?"
- 5. Worship for Strategy**
  - Set aside 30 minutes for worship this week
  - After worshipping, ask God for specific direction about a battle you're facing
  - Write down what you sense Him saying

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## Scripture Memory

**Ephesians 6:12** - "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."

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## Prayer Focus

### Pray Together For:

- 1. Revelation of Jesus** - That we would see Him as He truly is, including as the Commander of Heaven's armies
- 2. Spiritual Discernment** - To recognize the true source of conflicts and battles in our lives
- 3. The Right Spirit** - That we would engage in warfare with the motive to save lives, not destroy them

4. **Protection** - For those in authority, military, and law enforcement who bear the sword
  5. **The Next Generation** - That God would raise up a generation trained to "speak with the enemies at the gate"
  6. **Current World Conflicts** - For wisdom, for evil to be stopped, and for the gospel to penetrate closed regions
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## Closing Reflection

**Read together: Matthew 16:18** - "On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

Remember: We are not on the defensive; we are on the offensive. The gates of hell will not prevail against the advancing church. We are building AND warring. We are advancing the Kingdom of God, and no weapon formed against us shall prosper.

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## Next Steps

- Share with the group one specific way you will engage in spiritual warfare this week
- Commit to praying for one another throughout the week

## Main Points – A Man of War

### Sermon Summary:

This sermon explores the often-overlooked aspect of Jesus as a "man of war," challenging believers to recognize that they are living in the midst of an ongoing spiritual conflict that began in the Garden of Eden. Pastor Rob emphasizes that while Jesus is the Prince of Peace, He came to wage war against darkness, sin, and the kingdom of Satan. The message clarifies that this warfare is primarily spiritual in nature, though it manifests in physical reality. Christians are called to be soldiers in God's army, understanding that the ultimate goal of all godly warfare is to save lives and advance God's kingdom. The sermon addresses the tension between turning the other cheek and engaging in warfare, explaining that legitimate conflict must always be measured by whether it advances God's government and protects life. Pastor Rob emphasizes that seeing Jesus as He truly is—including as a warrior—transforms believers to be like Him, equipping them for the battle they're already in.

### Key Points:

- We are currently living in a war that began in Genesis 3:15, a conflict between light and darkness
- Christmas was a declaration of war, with Jesus coming to establish God's government and displace all other kingdoms
- Jesus is explicitly identified as a man of war who came not to bring peace immediately, but a sword
- The prayer "Your kingdom come" is a declaration of war against every other kingdom
- This warfare is primarily spiritual (Ephesians 6:12), fought against principalities and powers, not flesh and blood
- Physical war sometimes becomes necessary as a manifestation of spiritual conflict when evil must be stopped to preserve life
- The spirit of our warfare matters—it must always be motivated by saving life, not destroying it
- God has established authorities (Romans 13) as His ministers who bear the sword to execute justice
- Christians must avoid both isolationism and wrong-spirited zealotry in approaching warfare
- The ultimate weapon in spiritual warfare is the sword of His mouth—the preached Word of God
- The war is fundamentally about seed—protecting and raising the next generation
- God is both building and warring simultaneously, constructing His church while the gates of hell oppose it

### Scripture Reference:

- Mark 4:14 (series foundation: "What manner of man is this?")
- 1 John 3:2 (seeing Him as He is transforms us to be like Him)

- Romans 8:28-29 (all things work together to conform us to Christ's image)
- Genesis 3:15 (the first declaration of war between the seed of woman and serpent)
- Isaiah 9:2-7 (Christmas prophecy and declaration of war)
- Matthew 6:10 ("Your kingdom come" as warfare prayer)
- Matthew 10:34 (Jesus came to bring a sword, not peace)
- Revelation 19:11-16 (Jesus as warrior on white horse)
- Joshua 5:13-15 (Commander of the Lord's army)
- Ephesians 6:10-18 (the full armor of God)
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (weapons of our warfare)
- Luke 9:51-56 (wrong spirit in warfare—James and John wanting to call down fire)
- Romans 13:1-7 (governing authorities as God's ministers)
- Nehemiah 4:7-23 (building and warring simultaneously)

### Stories:

- The account of the disciples in the boat during the storm, awakening Jesus who calms the sea, leading them to ask "What manner of man is this?"
- Joshua's encounter with the Commander of the Lord's army before the battle of Jericho, where he falls in worship
- The movie "Sergeant York" about a hillbilly sharpshooter in World War I who wrestled with being a Christian and engaging in physical warfare, ultimately deciding to stop evil to save more lives
- James and John asking Jesus if they should call down fire on the Samaritan village that rejected Him, and Jesus rebuking them for operating in the wrong spirit
- Peter cutting off the servant's ear when Jesus was arrested, and Jesus telling him to put away his sword
- Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem while simultaneously defending against enemies, positioning people with swords, spears, and bows while they worked

## Discussion Questions – A Man of War

How does understanding Jesus as a 'man of war' challenge or expand your current view of His character and mission?

In what ways might the church today be 'hiding out in comfy church cultures' rather than arising as the light of the world in dark places?

Pastor Rob states that 'Christmas is a declaration of war.' How does viewing the incarnation through this lens change your understanding of the gospel message?

What does it mean practically to be 'conformed to the image of the Son' through the conflicts and challenges you face daily?

How can we discern whether a conflict or struggle in our lives is primarily spiritual warfare versus simply natural circumstances, and why does this distinction matter?

The sermon emphasizes that godly warfare must ultimately be about saving life rather than taking it. How should this principle shape our prayers regarding current global conflicts?

What are the dangers of becoming 'entangled with the affairs of this life' when we are called to be soldiers in spiritual warfare?

How do we balance Jesus' command to turn the other cheek with the biblical mandate for authorities to bear the sword and execute justice against evil?

In what ways might Christians today be operating in the wrong spirit when engaging cultural or spiritual battles, similar to James and John wanting to call down fire?

Pastor Rob mentions that seeing Jesus as He is transforms us to be like Him. What specific aspect of Jesus as the 'commander of the Lord's army' do you need to see more clearly right now?

# Scriptures – A Man of War

## Explicitly Mentioned References:

1. **Mark 4:14** (context: Mark 4:35-41) - "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him"
2. **1 John 3:2** - "We shall be like him because we shall see him as he is"
3. **Romans 8:28-29** - All things working together for good; conformed to the image of His Son
4. **Genesis 3:15** - Enmity between the serpent and the woman; bruising of the head and heel
5. **Isaiah 9:2-7** - People in darkness seeing a great light; "For unto us a child is born"
6. **Matthew 6:10** - "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"
7. **Matthew 10:34-39** - "I came not to bring peace but a sword"
8. **Revelation 19:11-16** - Jesus on a white horse, making war, King of Kings and Lord of Lords
9. **Joshua 5:13-15** - Commander of the army of the Lord appears to Joshua
10. **Ephesians 6:10-20** - The whole armor of God; wrestling not against flesh and blood
11. **2 Corinthians 10:3-6** - Weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty
12. **2 Timothy 2:3-4** - Endure hardship as a good soldier; not entangling in affairs of life
13. **Genesis 9:6** - "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed"
14. **Ecclesiastes 8:11** - "Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily..."
15. **Romans 13:1-7** - Submission to governing authorities; they bear not the sword in vain
16. **Luke 9:51-56** - James and John wanting to call fire down; "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of"
17. **Nehemiah 4:7-9, 13-14** - Building walls while facing opposition; "Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight"
18. **Psalms 127:1-5** - "Except the Lord builds the house"; children as arrows
19. **Matthew 16:18** - "On this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail"

## Additional References Alluded To:

20. **Romans 12:21** - "Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good" (mentioned but not fully quoted)
21. **Matthew 22:21** - "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's" (referenced in Sergeant York story)
22. **John 18:10-11** - Peter cutting off the servant's ear; "Put your sword away" (referenced)

## Devotional – A Man of War

### Day 1: Seeing Jesus as He Is

**Reading:** 1 John 3:1-3; Mark 4:35-41

**Devotional:** The disciples' question—"What manner of man is this?"—invites us into transformative encounter. When we truly see Jesus as He is, something supernatural occurs: we become like Him. This isn't about self-improvement but divine transformation. The experienced fishermen had exhausted their solutions before encountering Jesus' authority over the storm. Similarly, God often allows our human glory to be deleted so His glory can be revealed. Today, ask the Holy Spirit to show you Jesus in fresh ways. Where have you been relying on your own strength? What storms are exposing your need for His supernatural intervention? Worship creates the environment where revelation comes, and revelation changes us from glory to glory.

### Day 2: The Declaration of War

**Reading:** Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 9:2-7

**Devotional:** Christmas wasn't just a celebration—it was a declaration of war. When God sent His Son, He launched an invasion against every kingdom of darkness. "For unto us a child is born" announced the arrival of a government that would never end, displacing all others. This war isn't against flesh and blood but against the powers of darkness that have held humanity captive. The increase of His government means the decrease of every opposing force. Are you praying "Your kingdom come" with understanding? This prayer invites God's rule to overturn everything contrary to His will. Today, recognize that you live on a battlefield where light confronts darkness, and your prayers are weapons of warfare.

### Day 3: Spiritual Weapons for Spiritual War

**Reading:** Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6

**Devotional:** We don't wrestle against people but against principalities and powers in heavenly places. This truth liberates us from fighting the wrong battles. When we misidentify our enemy, we respond inappropriately and remain defeated. God has equipped us with mighty spiritual weapons—truth, righteousness, faith, salvation, the Word, and prayer. The sword of the Spirit, God's spoken Word under His anointing, is an atomic weapon in the spiritual realm. It pierces hearts and transforms cultures. Today, examine your battles. Are you fighting people or spiritual forces? Put on the full armor and speak God's Word boldly. Your obedience gives you authority to punish disobedience in the spiritual realm.

## Day 4: The Spirit of Our Warfare

**Reading:** Luke 9:51-56; Romans 13:1-7

**Devotional:** Jesus rebuked His disciples when they wanted to call down fire on those who rejected Him. "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of," He said. The spirit behind our warfare matters profoundly. Jesus came to save lives, not destroy them. If our warfare doesn't ultimately aim to protect and save life, it cannot be godly. This applies to spiritual intercession and natural conflicts alike. We must guard against zealous prayers birthed from wrong spirits. God has established governing authorities as His ministers to execute justice and restrain evil. Today, examine your heart. Are your prayers motivated by love for people or anger at opposition? Pray with the Holy Spirit's help for discernment and right motives.

## Day 5: Building and Warring for the Next Generation

**Reading:** Psalm 127; Matthew 16:18; Nehemiah 4:7-14

**Devotional:** God is simultaneously building and warring. He builds His church while the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. The enemy becomes furious when God's kingdom advances, particularly when it touches the next generation. Children are God's heritage, arrows in our quiver to speak with enemies at the gate. Nehemiah positioned families with swords, spears, and bows, declaring: "Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your families." We're called to the same assignment. Today, recognize your role in this dual mission. How are you investing in building God's kingdom? How are you standing guard through prayer and watchfulness? Worship Jesus as Commander of heaven's armies, and receive your strategic assignment for this hour.