

The Spiritual Realm - Lesson 16: Spiritual Warfare Part 1

Angelic Warfare

2 Kings 6:15-19 *When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" 16 He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." 17 Then Elisha prayed and said, "O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see." So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. 18 And when the Syrians came down against him, Elisha prayed to the Lord and said, "Please strike this people with blindness." So he struck them with blindness in accordance with the prayer of Elisha. 19 And Elisha said to them, "This is not the way, and this is not the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek." And he led them to Samaria.*

- This teaches us a crucial truth: what we can see is never the full reality.
- The believer often feels surrounded, outnumbered, and overwhelmed, but there are forces at work that cannot be seen with natural eyes.
- Faith believes that God is active even when He is hidden.

Daniel 10:12-14 *Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. 13 The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, 14 and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come."*

Daniel 10:20-21 *Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. 21 But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince."*

1. God sends angels as ministers and messengers to the three-dimensional realm.
2. Evil angels do not want good angels ministering in the three-dimensional realm. They seek to disrupt God's ministry to people.
3. Angels fight against each other in the spiritual realm.
4. Angels residing in the spiritual realm may have powers that impact governments and nations. It is very possible that governments and high-ranking officials are heavily influenced by the spiritual realm.
5. Michael the archangel seems to be the spiritual power assigned to protect the nation of Israel.

Deuteronomy 32:7-9 *Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations; ask your father, and he will show you, your elders, and they will tell you. 8 When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God. 9 But the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage.*

- A few scholars (Michael Heiser) use this passage to understand that angelic beings or spiritual rulers are over earthly territories.

Revelation 12:7-9 *Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, 8 but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.*

Revelation 19:14-15 *And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. 15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.*

The Reality of the Spiritual Realm as Related to the Believer

Ephesians 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places*

- In Ephesians 1:3, Paul is making a point that the believer has already been given every spiritual blessing from the spiritual realm.
- The “heavenly places” spoken of by Paul in this verse is the spiritual dimension.

Ephesians 1:20-21 *that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.*

Ephesians 2:4-6 *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*

- He claims that the believer is both in the three-dimensional physical world and in the higher-dimensional spiritual realm at the same time.
- We are positionally in heaven because we are in Christ and with Christ, practically we are still here on earth making decisions and living life.

Ephesians 3:10 *so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.*

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 Battlefield for Spiritual Warfare Is the Mind

- The battlefield where spiritual warfare takes place is in the mind, thoughts, or a person’s consciousness.
 - What a person sees, feels, hears, or interprets with their five senses impacts their thoughts and beliefs.
 - What a person thinks and believes impacts their physical and spiritual life.
 - Satan and his demons desire to influence and control a person’s thinking.
 - People, because of their sin, have been relegated to the physical, three-dimensional world.
 - Satan and his demons seek to use the five senses to impact the person’s thoughts, and thus a battle is waged.
- Satan blinds unbelievers’ minds or thoughts from seeing the truth.

2 Corinthians 4:4 *In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

Ephesians 4:17-18 *Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.*

- In this passage Paul uses several words that emphasize a person's thinking or thoughts.
- He uses the words *mind*, *understanding*, and *ignorance*.

2 Corinthians 11:3 *But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*

- Paul warns the church that their minds are susceptible to being deceived by Satan and his angelic workers.

2 Corinthians 2:11 *so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.*

- Here the word translated *designs* is the same word translated *thoughts* in 2 Corinthians 11:3 and 2 Corinthians 10:5.
- *Thoughts* and *designs* being the same Greek word, speaks of thinking, purposes, intentions, plans, or strategy.
- To deceive people, to blind people from knowing and doing God's will.

- Satan uses entryways to influence a person's thoughts or mind.
- He seeks to deceive the unbeliever into remaining focused on the physical world only and not believing the truth of Scripture.
- Satan and his workers of iniquity have no authority in a believer's life unless they have been granted permission.
- These gateways are areas where people willfully turn from truth and follow the flesh or the world: occult involvement, drug use, persistent sinful habits, unresolved trauma, abuse, false doctrine, bitterness, emotional bondage, idolatry,

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 *For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ*

1. Destroy strongholds or fortresses of false thinking.

- What is a stronghold? It is a mental block, mental barrier, mental wall of unbelief or false belief.
- It is a lie that has been believed so long it feels normal, reasonable, and unquestionable.
- It can be a **worldview**, such as materialism, hedonism, Darwinism, secularism, relativism, communism, atheism.
- A stronghold can also be a **personal attitude**. Worry, seeking approval, prideful thinking...

Identify the lie behind the stronghold.

- Many outward sins are fed by inward lies. The issue is not only behavior, but belief.
 - "I have to be in control or everything will fall apart."
 - "I need people's approval to be okay."
 - "God may forgive others, but not me."
 - "I will never change."
 - "My worth comes from success, appearance, or popularity."

What lie have I allowed to build a wall in my mind?

2. Destroy arguments and thoughts against the knowledge of God.

- This is clearly an action to be taken against thoughts that are directly contrary to the truth or knowledge of God.
- These are reasonings, excuses, rationalizations, philosophies, and proud opinions that exalt themselves against what God has said.

Learn to recognize rationalized sin.

- Sometimes the most dangerous arguments are not public philosophies but private excuses:
 - “I know it is wrong, but in my case it is understandable.”
 - “I deserve this.”
 - “Everybody does it.”
 - “It is not really hurting anyone.”
 - “I can handle it.”
 - “This is just who I am.”

Refuse “lofty opinions” that exalt man over God.

- This includes prideful thinking that says:
 - “I know better than God.”
 - “My feelings determine truth.”
 - “What God says is outdated.”
 - “I will define morality for myself.”
 - Paul says these lofty things must be brought down.

3. Take every thought captive and align it with Christ.

- This is taking thoughts that are contrary to the truth and locking them up or making them prisoner.
- The opposing thoughts are to be changed and conformed into Christ-like thoughts.

How do we take thoughts captive?

- **Recognize the thought** – name it honestly.
- **Reveal the lie** – ask what makes it contrary to Scripture.
- **Replace it with truth** – answer it with God’s Word.
- **Reject agreement with it** – refuse to keep replaying it.
- **Redirect the mind** – think on Christ and obey what is true.

You cannot always keep a thought from entering your mind, but by God’s grace you can refuse to let it rule your mind.