

Attention:

For those who are living for the Lord, you can believe that when you woke up this morning, hell had a plan to take your life. Satan is thinking about a way to attack your life and faith through strongholds and spiritual wars.

Need:

Are you at war with a demonic enemy? Into today's society, people think that demonic attacks are only in ancient times or Bible stories, but some of you are on a repetitious roller coaster with a real devil and think that it is merely hateful people. You must understand that you are in spiritual warfare when Satan attacks your comforts. He doesn't always show up with pain but creates an at-ease attitude. He is a real enemy that will feed your ego, numb your convictions, and keep you entertained while your prayer life quietly dies. Satan's intention is to neutralize the power of God in you. You must understand your warfare, take down strongholds, and live in the power of God through obedience every day.

Background:

Paul wrote this letter from Macedonia (a region of Greece) a year after writing 1 Corinthians, about A.D. 56. This letter is a picture of a shepherd's heart to a wayward people that taught the Corinthians that a true heart can only come from God's love. Corinth was a tempestuous city that no longer introduced philosophers and playwrights but was dominated by debauchery, sex, and human wisdom. **It was filled with harlots, adulterers, fornicators, homosexuality, and lechers. Sex and idolatry were a business.** The city was in moral decay and Rome did little to improve virtues. **The Corinthians were so easily impressed by external factors and outward appearance.** They walked by sight, not by faith (**2 Cor. 5:7**). Paul was not moved by credentials and letters of recommendation, as some of the Corinthians were (**2 Cor. 3:1-3**). Rather, Paul was led by the Spirit and functioned from the heart of God.

Paul's purpose for writing this letter was to rebuke the false teachers that had infiltrated the church claiming to be apostles of Jesus Christ. These false teachers promoted themselves and their own ideas while attempting to dissolve the apostle and his message. However, Paul points to the fact that his sufferings indeed highlight a dependency on his need for Christ Jesus.

The Corinthians were easily impressed by great speeches and speakers and willing to believe anyone with persuasive words (2 Cor. 11:4-5). Even if they twisted the gospel of Christ into a different gospel, they were gullible. Some of the self-proclaimed super apostles were taking monetary advantage of people. Paul rebuked these false teachers, referring to them as deceitful workers as Satan, angels of light (**2 Cor. 11:13-14**). He warned them that they were enslaving themselves, bringing on shame.

The weapons of the world are learning, personal influence, impressive credentials, eloquent speech, and the like. These things Paul had discounted and discarded (**Phil. 3:4-8**). The weapons Paul used were the Word of God, presence, and prayer (**Eph. 6:17-18**). Neither the god of this Age nor his henchmen could oppose the knowledge or power of God on which Paul relied. No thought, including those of his opponents, is beyond the knowledge of God.

1. Understand Your Warfare—

- a. Know the tactics of spiritual darkness.
 - i. *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. (1 Peter 5:8, NKJV).*
- b. Hell studies patterns.
 - i. Satan watches where you are inconsistent, wounded, bitter, and prideful.
- c. A weak prayer life produces weak resistance.
 - i. Bitterness can poison years of spiritual growth; flesh will negotiate with sin while the Spirit demands crucifixion.
 - ii. *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. (Eph. 6:12).*
- d. Take notice of the spirit of pride (See lying spirit).

2. Destroying Strongholds—

- a. Be equipped with God's Word.
 - i. A stronghold is something that prohibits your success; it is a blockade.
 - ii. *No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their righteousness is from Me," Says the LORD. (Isaiah 54:17, NKJV).*
- b. Spiritual warfare is not just rebuking demons; it is taking control of your thoughts.
 - i. **Simon the sorcerer** wanted Christ without surrender (**Acts 8:18-23**).
- c. Know the gospel.
 - i. *A Bible that stays closed produces a mind that stays vulnerable.*
- d. Take control of illegitimate thoughts.

3. The Power of Obedience—

- a. Live in the power of God every day.
 - i. *"But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!" (James 2:18–19).*
- b. Every real move of God will face resistance because freedom threatens the kingdom of darkness.
- c. Every day something is fighting for your attention, your appetite, your worship, and your obedience.
- d. Come to maturity in Christ.