

# Spiritual Warfare

## Spiritual Realities

*"We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one." (1 Jn. 5:19)*

*"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work." (1 Jn 3:8)*

*"If I expel demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. How can someone enter into the house of a strong man and steal his property, unless he first ties up the strong man? And then he can thoroughly plunder his house." (Matt 12:28-29)*

*"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (Eph 6:10-12)*

*"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds." (2 Cor 10:3-4)*

What is "spiritual warfare"? It refers to this conflict described in Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. Jesus is on a great rescue mission - binding the evil one, destroying his works, and plundering what has been stolen. As the Kingdom of God advances, enemy spiritual powers attack and resist this advance at every turn and use every scheme at their disposal to thwart God's redemptive work. In other words, you don't need to go looking for spiritual opposition - if you are partnering with God's Kingdom work, it will find you! The struggle is very real, though it is not against people! What can you do when you encounter this spiritual attack and resistance?

If the Kingdom is advancing, mostly the enemy will try to get you to move – to give way and give up, to retreat and flee. That's why Paul says repeatedly the important thing is to STAND and RESIST him! See Eph. 6 and the defensive resources that are provided to us called the "armor of God." We can also be called on to CONFRONT evil where it rears its head, as well as CONTEND for what is right. All of these (stand, resist, confront, contend) may rightly be called spiritual warfare. Our weapons are different from the world's, and like Jesus we conquer from a place of weakness, love, and total dependence on God.

## Prerequisites for Spiritual Warfare

- Love: Our motivation is from a place of love for God's people, exercised with humility and the leading of the Spirit.
- One must have a clean heart. Any unconfessed sin can and will be used against you! Keep short accounts and confess sin regularly.
- Gratitude and thanksgiving. The evil one hates for God to receive praise and glory. The more we worship, the more evil is constrained. Scriptural worship in particular brings glory to God because it focuses on his character and greatness.
- Loving-kindness and peace. Our captain is the Prince of Peace, while Satan sows hostility, envy, distrust, and discord.
- Faith in God's goodness and power. We must believe that God is good and the rewarder of those who seek him. We can trust that he will deliver us from evil and redeem our suffering. Yes, the powers are a reality – but Jesus is the ultimate reality, Christ the surpassing power - and by faith we are seated with him in the heavenly realms! (Eph. 2)

## Spiritual Warfare

### Principles

- Don't fight alone – God has given you partners! Recruit an intercession team and lean on them. Find allies, and work with them humbly. Unity and harmony in the body of Christ are important.
- Be self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined (Titus 1:8). Submission to Jesus' lordship over all your life is vital. Power and authority come from being yielded to Jesus as he was to the Father.
- Be sober and alert (1 Peter 5:8). One of the enemy's chief weapons is deception – don't be fooled. Not everything that seems good is from God. We need to ask the Lord for discernment and leading.

**Provision** – God has given us ways to exercise our authority in Christ. These weapons have “divine power to demolish strongholds” as Paul says.

- The Word of God – the sword of the Spirit!
- The Name of Jesus – resisting, binding, and casting out evil in the name of Jesus
- Jesus' blood and the triumph of the Cross over evil
- Being filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18, Luke 11:13)
- Taking up the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:13-17)
- Praying at all times in the Spirit (both in community and individually – Eph 6:18)

### Protection Prayers

- There are written protection prayers available from the Intercession Dept.
- Pray scripture! Psalm 91, Ephesians 6:10-20, Ephesians 1:3-23, Colossians 1:9-20...
- Find scripture that is relevant to the situation you are facing and pray that.

### Preparation

1. Discern the will of God – when to fight, where to fight, how to fight... and even if this is indeed your fight. Not every fight is yours.
2. Discern the enemy's strategies. What areas in your life, family, fellowship, community and/or nation are under attack? What schemes, strongholds, and deceptions is the enemy using? Are there historical realities that may give you a clue as to what you're up against? Is there personal background or other issues at play with the people you are praying for?
3. Enlist help! Don't go it alone. Who can pray with you in person? Who can intercede for you as backup? Get people to fast with you.

### Practice

Identify an area of warfare or opposition you are facing. Pray about it with your partner or team. Listen for how to proceed. Pick one scripture and one protection prayer to pray over you.

*Written by Dr. Alice Brown-Collins and Scott Anderson, InterVarsity 2023*