

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Introductory Thoughts:

Spiritual warfare is the ongoing unseen battle between God (& His angels) and the created being named Satan (& his demonic forces) which began sometime around the beginning of creation. From the Garden of Eden (Genesis) until the end of time (Revelation) the Scriptures reveal the progressive workings of Satan & his forces continually influencing “behind the scenes” individual people even up to today’s world events.

These particular forces are invisible spirits that continually strategize to create doubts (unbelief), deceptions, discouragement, disappointment, depression & destruction, temptations in order to divert, devour, derail, destroy, defeat & damn mankind. Their evil intentions are to always counterfeit, hinder &/or stop God’s purposes & plans for the world, especially the people of God throughout history. What an awesome declaration of Jesus Christ who said, “The gates of hell will not prevail against His church” (Matt 16:18).

Therefore, Christians need to understand these enemies & their tactics by personally knowing Christ & our union with Him. We must then align ourselves in submission to His Lordship & the authority of His word! As we are empowered by the Holy Spirit we will experience victory over the world, the flesh & the devil.

Since the Bible is the most infallible, complete authoritative truth source, we can base our world view, belief system & personal faith confidently on God’s word. You can absolutely trust Christ that He is able to save (deliver) completely.

To think that there is further extra biblical information we need to discover in order to be victorious over demonic/Satanic influences is to say God was deficient in providing everything we need & to deny the following:

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17

“As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1:3-4

“For in Him (Christ) dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, Who is the head of all principality and power.” Colossians 2:9-10

“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” Romans 8:37

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world-our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” 1 John 5:4-5

“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.” 2 Corinthians 9:8

Therefore we must continually be vigilant to be rooted and grounded in The Word (Col 1:23, 2:7; Eph 3:17) & learn how to appropriate our spiritual resources (weapons of warfare) in every battle we face in this life.

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breast-plate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” Ephesians 6:10-20

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down of strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.” 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

WHY HAS SPIRITUAL WARFARE BEEN IGNORED & OR AVOIDED BY MANY CHRISTIANS & EVEN CHURCHES?

1. It's kind of unnerving & uncomfortable to think of an invisible enemy that's out to get us!
2. People tend to fear what they don't understand, so when information is threatening to our comfort zone or intimidating in some way, they would rather not think about it..
3. Some would rather falsely think.... “If we ignore Satan, he'll leave us alone or go away”... “The less said the better”...”Ignorance is bliss” – However scripture says “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge”... (Hosea 4:6)
4. Satan loves to have people minimize & or even deny his activities in the world & individual lives. The more he can keep people ignorant of his strategies the more damage he can do.
5. Satan has created much disinformation & confusion regarding the subject throughout history, most people don't know what to believe!
6. Since there are so many conflicting view points many Christians are too lazy “to do their due-diligence” & evaluate what they hear through the grid of scripture. It requires time.
7. Some people have a difficult time keeping balanced. Extreme obsession or total avoidance are equally wrong. It takes work to maintain a balanced perspective.

8. People are too influenced by their feelings & choose what suits to maintain their comfort zone.
9. Since most Christians don't know how to utilize their spiritual weapons of warfare they keep losing their spiritual battles.
10. Many just don't take it seriously & really value spiritual victory. Why?
11. After much failure many just give up & give into temptation. This leads them into the deception that "it's hopeless". This defeatist attitude reinforces the wrong thinking. "I've failed so much... Why bother?"

Well, I have great news for you... during the course of this study you will discover verses maximizing the promises & principles of God's Word that will build your faith (Romans 10:17) & renew assurance that there is help & hope to live victoriously!

WARNINGS & POSSIBLE DANGERS REGARDING SPIRITUAL WARFARE

1. If you're not careful you could become preoccupied & even obsessed with researching the numerous aspects of the "spirit world" throughout history.
2. There are thousands of cults, religions, demonological cultures, man-centered-worldly philosophies & psychologies, supernatural phenomenon, black & white magic, paganism, Satanism, new age spiritism, voodoo, spells or curses, astrology horoscopes, tarot cards, paranormal activity, levitation, palm reading, psychics, mysticism, hypnosis, séances, mediums, channeling, ufology/UFO's, automatic writing, out of the body experience, astral projection, fortune telling, divination, trances, mental telepathy, occult practices & games (Ouija board, bloody mary, magic eight ball, video & other board games) witchcraft, Wicca (nature worship), sorcery, superstitions, mysticism (some martial arts), yoga (religion not exercise), transcendental meditation(TM), spirit worship, fetishism, charms, crystals, blood pacts, & numerous other more subtle forms of these things that lure people into these beliefs & practices..... all around the world! Many have gotten side tracked & wasted years of their lives in the quest of trying to understand it all through countless books, TV, video-games, movies & the internet.
3. The research alone would be nerve ending & one could easily not only become unbalanced but drift from the faith because of these doctrines of demons of which Paul warned us in 1Tim. 4:1-2! Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving.
4. We should be focused on (looking unto Christ), "the author & finisher of our faith" (Heb 12:2), not the enemy & all the distracting counterfeits. If Satan can direct your fascination onto all these other things in place of Christ you will waste your energy, time & resources & miss out on fulfilling the real purposes of our existence in this world! We are ambassadors of Christ (2 Cor. 5:20), witnesses (Acts 1:8, Luke 24:46-47) to be preaching the gospel (Mk 16:15), making disciples (Mt 28:18-20) & building up the body of Christ through our spiritual gifts (Eph. 4:11-16, 1 Cor 12, Rom 12:3-8, 1Pet. 4:10-11) (But this is another study!)

5. Another danger we must avoid is blaming Satan for everything. A comedian from the 60's was famous for the line "The devil made me do it!" This thinking results in people not taking personal responsibility for their words, responses, attitudes & actions. Mark 7:21-23, James 1:13-15 & 4:1-4 clearly state lust, sin & conflict come from within our hearts. But make no mistake, the enemy knows "what buttons" to push to bring you to make foolish & sinful choices.
6. Some even "see a demon" behind everything".... from tortillas & cars, (inanimate objects) to every human reaction & behavior & emotion. Such extreme overemphasis gives the enemy more credit than he deserves & is unrealistic & imbalanced.
7. Some have actually erroneously written books creating whole doctrines of instruction, "formulas" & actual exact wording as "incantations to repeat, to attempt to stop &/or defeat Satan & his forces; most of which have absolutely no Biblical evidence or support whatsoever, and they've bypassed the key Scriptural principles which are foundational to victory! They have not balanced their beliefs regarding spiritual warfare within the context of the whole counsel of God. NOTE: When studying through the Word – seek to understand the passage mentioning Satan, demons....within the context – don't make more out of it than the Bible writers intended!
8. Some have also dangerously minimized the spirit world & Satan's strategies, underestimating these influential spiritual forces at work behind the scenes.
9. Unfortunately many Christians don't take these things seriously or go far enough to actually prepare themselves with the armor of God/the Biblical teaching on how to deal specifically with sin, suffering & Satan in order to be victorious.
10. Finally, some foolishly think that we can do battle with those principalities, "powers, spiritual hosts of wickedness in high places" without actually using the Scriptures! Read Mt. 4:1-11 & make no mistake...Jesus (God in the flesh) depended upon & used the Word of God for His victory over Satan's temptation. "It is written..." (3X)! If He needed to utilize the Word directly in answering the onslaughts of the enemy...how much more should we??!! (More on this will be said later.)

WHY SHOULD WE STUDY SPIRITUAL WARFARE

1. The Bible talks about God, Angels, Satan & demons as a reality throughout the history of man, not just in the past but present tense & future. You can't read God's Word without seeing it (in a balanced context). Therefore, just as it's true about everything recorded in the Scriptures, it is there for several purposes: our understanding, our instruction & most importantly it glorifies and magnifies God. We would be wise to allow our worldview & beliefs to be shaped by these truths.
2. As spiritual beings, everything in life potentially involves the spiritual realm whether in our relationship with God through Christ & the Holy Spirit, or the direct or indirect involvement of unseen personalities, good or evil.
3. The Scriptures themselves state in 2 Cor. 2:11 "for we are not ignorant of (Satan's) devices", clearly implying we had better be absolutely alert & aware of our enemies strategies "lest he take advantage of us". So wisdom is to know your enemies & how they work to defeat us, so that we can be prepared in everyway. Even in sports completion observing the opponents past performance prepares you in knowing what to expect & possibly predict what they could potentially be capable of. In fact every soldier will tell you the first rule of warfare is "know your enemy"! Only then do we

increase our chances of winning. In Christ we already have everything we need but we need to know the context in which the enemy operates so we can apply the appropriate scriptures.

4. Elsewhere, the Word of God exhorts us to “be sober, be vigilant because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith”. (1Peter 5:7-9) Also see James 4:7, Eph 4:27.

5. If we do not know who & what we are up against, we will quickly fall into deception, sin, false teaching & numerous problems resulting in needless suffering, overwhelming consequences & ultimate defeat.

6. Therefore, since God never intended that we live defeated lives...wisdom is to know how the enemy operates (past, present & future) & what ways he could potentially attack us personally. Evaluate where you have “fallen” the most).

7. Only then can we “tailor-make” prepared planned responses, utilizing the word of God & our weapons of warfare (Eph. 6:10-20, 2 Cor. 10:4-5) so we can resist the devil (Js. 4:7), be protected & experience the abundant, fruitful, victorious life.

FURTHER BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY

1. You will have a Biblically balanced view of angels, demons & Satan in the context of Scripture.

2. Then you will be able to extract the truths revealed, in order to interpret life accurately & respond appropriately.

3. By basing your faith on the facts of the Scriptural foundation you will quickly discern what’s true & what is false. Therefore you will avoid the disinformation & contradictory “junk” that just complicates the simple Biblical principles we need for victory.

4. The more you know the truth (God’s Word), the sooner you will spot the error (counterfeits) a mile away and the sooner you will be set free” (Jn. 8:32, 36) from _____.

5. In understanding spiritual warfare & the Biblical insights from each passage, the easier it becomes to recognize & apply the relevant Scriptures directly relating to the issues of life in whatever circumstances & relationships you are in.

6. You will know how Satan & his forces have been defeated and their powers made null and void by understanding the victorious work of Christ at the cross & how our union with Him assures our victory.

7. You will learn how to appropriate our spiritual resources and know the balance of God’s responsibility & our responsibility. (a) What God has already done through Christ; (b) What He promises to do; (c) What we must do to utilize our spiritual armor and weaponry; (d) What Biblical principles we need to continue to practice to be victorious.

8. You will understand how to deal with temptation Biblically & how to effectively resist Satan so that he will flee (Js. 4:7) leaving no room for the devil to gain a foothold thorough our thoughts, desires or behaviors.

9. You will have Biblical insights into spiritual warfare prayer. Learn how and what Scriptures to pray into your life and the lives of others.
10. You will know the Scriptures that expose the occult, magic, witchcraft & the like, all of which Scripture warns us about that we must avoid. Since those things are entry points of the enemy into one's life. . .
11. You will also learn the Biblical principles & steps necessary to apply in "tearing down strongholds" & breaking the bondage of occult involvement.
12. Finally, you will be prepared & equipped with a more confident attitude & a better position to reduce the enemy's attempts to rob you of your joy, your peace, your fruitfulness for God's kingdom & your victory.