# **Spiritual Warfare**

Depending on your denominational background, the idea of spiritual warfare could be a common topic or seem pretty foreign. While we can’t cover the subject in its entirety, we can provide a Biblical overview in light of being a new creation in Christ. To begin, you must recognize we are in a war.

* There are two kingdoms: The Kingdom of Light (God’s Son) and the Kingdom of Darkness. Christians are a part of God’s Kingdom (Col 1:13-14).
* These kingdoms are at war with one another (Matt 10:34-36, Matt 12:25-29).
* Christians represent God’s Kingdom, proclaiming the Gospel wherever they go (2 Cor 3:4-5, Matt 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 4:18, 1 Cor 2:1-5, 1 Peter 2:9, Matt 4:17).
* The enemy’s kingdom is not divided (Mark 3:23-27, Matthew 12:25-29, Luke 11:17-22).
* God’s Kingdom people should not be divided either (1 Cor 1:10, 2 Cor 13:11, Acts 4:32, Gal 3:28, John 13:35).

Spiritual warfare has both offensive and defensive components. These components frequently overlap in the same passages. Defensively, we need to know the truth and stand in it. Scripture abounds with verses to this end. That is why we must be in the scriptures daily and allow them to transform the way we think and perceive our circumstances. Offensively, we must act on the truth in faith and do what God calls us to do. If we don’t know what God’s Word says, how can we stand and act on the truth? Consider the following:

John 8:31-32

*“So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, [then] you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”*

James 4:7

*“Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”*

2 Corinthians 11:3

*“But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity [of devotion] to Christ.”*

1Co 15:55-58

*“55 “O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?” 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; 57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not [in] vain in the Lord.”*

1 John 3:7-9

*“7 Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; 8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. 9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”*

Ephesians 6:11-20

*“11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual [forces] of wickedness in the heavenly [places.] 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 15 and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil [one.] 17 And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, 19 and [pray] on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the Gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in [proclaiming] it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”*

Ephesians 6 is particularly relevant when talking about Spiritual Warfare. Paul uses the Roman soldier’s outfit to describe how to “stand firm” in the Good News of the Gospel. Paul reminds us that we have Truth (John 8:32), Righteousness (2 Cor 5:21), Salvation (John 3:16), Peace (John 14:27), and Faith (Eph 2:8).

The armor of God is predominately “defensive” in nature. It reflects on key elements of what Christ has already done for us. However, it does include one offensive component, the ”Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” (Another reminder to know God’s Word.) Interestingly, the Greek word here is rēma (ῥῆμα), which refers to the verbal words of God as much as the written words in scripture. Many incorrectly assume the Greek word used here refers to the written or logos (λόγος) of God. In reality, our sword is knowing and responding to everything God says and has written. This agrees with what Jesus said about how He functioned: He only did and said what God told Him to.

John 5:19

“Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless [it is] something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.”

John 12:49

*“For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment [as to] what to say and what to speak.”*

Christians must be led by the Holy Spirit in the same way Jesus was (Gal 5:16). Just as Jesus combatted Satan’s temptations in the wilderness by the Word of God, we too can take an offensive stance based on what God has said (Matt 4:1-11). As we agree with what God is saying, we resist the advancement of the Kingdom of Darkness. More importantly, as we stand on the truth, we represent the Kingdom of God. Make no mistake, brothers and sisters, this is warfare. When we obey what Father God tells us to do, we’re forcefully advancing His Kingdom (Matt 11:12).

Hell cannot successfully stand against God’s Bride, the Church (Matt 16:18). Satan’s strategy has remained pretty consistent from Genesis 3, with only slight variations of attack throughout the ages. Consider Genesis 3 and how the serpent tempted Eve. “Did God really say?” “You surely won’t die!” “You can be like God!” The temptations in Genesis 3 were essentially:

1. Are you sure you know the truth?
2. God is lying to you.
3. God is holding out on you.
4. You can become your own God. Just take this situation into your own hands.

We fall for the same tricks today. We doubt the goodness of God’s character. We believe He’s holding out on us. We think we can do life better than Him. Why? Often because we’ve forgotten that God loves us and that we were made in His image. Satan has convinced us his evil works are actually from God (Job 2:9). Satan tried to sell Adam and Eve god-likeness when, in reality, they were already created in God’s image. Let’s not fall for the same lies.

Listen to what scripture says:

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

*“3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. 5 [We are] destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and [we are] taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,”*

Romans 8:37-39

*“37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

2 Thessalonians 3:3

*“But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil [one.]”*

Romans 8:31

*“What then shall we say to these things? If God [is] for us, who [is] against us?”*

1John 4:4

*“You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”*

Romans 12:21

*“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*

Scripture shows us that most of our battle is in our minds. If we know the truth and choose to live as though the Word is true, we will experience peace and freedom. In week four, we discussed how beliefs and feelings lead to actions. In week two, we discussed how listening to the Holy Spirit in the inner man can lead to victorious living. What we believe and choose impacts everything we do! If Satan can convince us to believe a lie, we will live as though that lie is true. Each time we believe another lie, we give the enemy ground in our inner life. Likewise, when we live outwardly as the kingdom of darkness does, we make room for that darkness to influence us. (Consider the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21, Colossians 3:5-8, and Mark 7:21-23.) We must stand firm in our identity in Christ, on the truth. We must choose to live by faith in obedience to every word God tells us.

The primary way we can help others when praying for them is by giving God space to speak truth. God knows when the person needs an encouraging word or when a lie-based belief is getting in the way of abundant life. We don’t have to try to figure anything out. We present their feelings and beliefs to the Lord, asking Him questions about what He thinks about a situation. This is spiritual warfare on the individual level. As Isaiah 61:1 states, we’ve been anointed by the Holy Spirit to be about God’s work, binding up the brokenhearted and proclaiming freedom to the captives. Therefore, Prayer Ministry is spiritual warfare and Kingdom work.

In summary, spiritual warfare involves:

1. Knowing and standing in the truth
2. Being obedient to follow the Lord’s leading in our life.

As we lead others to the Lord and His Word in prayer, we’re allowing God to correct areas in a person’s life that are out of alignment of God’s Kingdom design. Even better, we’re helping the body of Christ become healthier, thereby helping the entire body become healthier. We need each member doing what they were designed to do. What a privilege we have to partake in Father God’s Kingdom work!