

MORE THAN CONQUERORS!

Equipping for Spiritual Warfare

Session #1

A REASONED, SEASONED APPROACH TO SPIRITUAL WARFARE

I. THREE FOUNDATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

A. God Designed His Creation with the “DNA” of Free Moral Agency

1. high risk...high reward
2. God’s sovereignty over evil: Job; Isaiah 54:16, 17; Ro. 16:20

B. Two Injections of the Toxic Poison of Pride & Rebellion into Creation

1. pre-historic rebellion of Lucifer: Is. 14; Ezek. 28; Lu. 10:18; Rev. 12:4
2. poisoning the first human pair: the venom, two lies (Gen. 3:1-5)

- a) the Lord is not to be trusted (“Did God *really* say?”)
- b) you can be like God without following his way (“you will be *like* God”)

C. The Lord’s Prognosis & Prescription (Gen. 3:14-19)

1. the prognosis (distress)

- a) for the woman—pain of labor bearing children
- b) for the man—strain of labor in work
- c) for them both
 - i. strained relationship with Yahweh
 - ii. strain of authority & submission “*tension in the tepee*”
 - iii. spiritual warfare: harassment from the devil

2. the prescription (a deliverer)

- a) Yahweh promises a seed who will crush the power of the devil
- b) the serpent will seek to destroy this seed

D. Getting inside the Devil’s Head

Someone will show up somewhere, sometime who has the power to squash my slimy head

E. Tracing the Promised Seed through Biblical History

II. SUMMARIZING THE BASICS OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

A. Jesus Defeated Satan and his Powers in the Wilderness & on the Cross

1. supremacy over the powers of darkness (Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 2:15)
2. the “already-but-not-yet” victory over evil (Rev. 12:10)
3. assurance of triumph (1 Jo. 3:8)

B. The Lord Allows Satan to serve as Tempter, Accuser, Destroyer

C. Saints are Responsible to Appropriately the Victory of the Cross

1. crushing Satan under our feet (Ro. 16:20)
2. seated with Jesus in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6)
3. responsibility to recognize & resist evil (Eph. 6; 1 Pet. 5:8; Jas. 3:13-4:10)
4. responsibility to overcome the evil one (1 Jo. 2:12-14; Rev. 2 & 3)

D. A Working Premise

Any saint who gets serious about prayer and kingdom service (church leadership, evangelism, disciple-making, missions, worship) becomes a threat to the enemy, and will likely feel the heat of increased spiritual warfare resistance.

*The devil has a “file” **on** you...but be encouraged...God has you tucked away **in** His file!*

-- Our Lord's Provision: If you are in Christ, and Christ is in you, you are--

- * A CHOSEN CHILD, ADOPTED BY THE FATHER (Eph. 1:4-6)
- * FORGIVEN & REDEEMED THROUGH THE CROSS (Col. 2:13-15)
- * TRANSFERRED FROM DARKNESS INTO LIGHT (Col. 1:13, 14)
- * GIVEN AUTHORITY OVER EVIL (Luke 10:20)
- * MORE THAN A CONQUEROR (Rom. 8:37)
- * SEATED IN THE HEAVENLIES (Eph. 2:6)
- * A ROYAL PRIEST (1 Pet. 2:9, 10)

DISCERNING SPIRITUAL WARFARE

We live in a time of increased immorality, violence, religious deception and resurgence of humanistic values. The cumulative weight of the past and current sin of humanity is, in a sense, "snowballing." The "mystery of iniquity" ("lawlessness") is, under God's sovereign control, surfacing. The supernatural conflict of the ages is breaking into the observable dimension of human events. Increasingly, the child of light will need to be better equipped to discern and deal with both the subtle and blatant aspects of evil.

I. IN THE LIVES OF UNBELIEVERS

- A. Materialism: idolatry of things ("lust of the eyes")
- B. Humanism: self-glorification of humanity ("pride of life")
- C. Hedonism: self-gratification of the senses ("lust of the flesh")
- D. Religious Deception: a multitude of forms--
 - the New Age Movement
 - the alarming increase of witchcraft and satanism

The chief purpose of the powers of darkness is to deceive and divert the unregenerate from redemption.

II. IN THE LIVES OF BELIEVERS

- A. Materialism: compromise with cultural comforts & values (Rev.3:14)
- B. Enticement to sin: oppression through ground given by willful sin (Eph. 4:27)
 - spiritual pride, sexual compromise, anger, bitterness.
- C. Direct Oppressive Attack:
 - 1. On personal weaknesses: fear, low self-esteem, areas of besetting sin, psychological problems
 - 2. On the family: break-up of the marital bond, harassment, ill-health, targeting of children (particularly teens)
 - 3. On cutting-edge servants committed to the kingdom work:
 - "fiery darts" designed to create fear, doubt, confusion, etc.

The chief purpose of the powers of darkness is to harass and hinder the Body of Christ from enjoying and engaging in effective, fruitful service.

- D. The Corporate Church
 - 1. Exploitation of unresolved sin: satanic stronghold through immorality, deceit, bitterness, etc.
THE BODY MUST MAINTAIN PURITY AND UNITY IN ORDER TO APPROPRIATE PROTECTION FROM THE EVIL ONE (2 Thess. 3:3,4; 1 Jo. 5:18).
 - 2. Exploitation of the "sub-scheme:" danger of ignoring or refusing to acknowledge and deal with satanic strategies, due to ignorance, skeptical rationalism, fear or inadequacy.
 - 3. Doctrinal deviation/deception: twisting Scriptural truth (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

Session #2

THE BATTLE WITHIN & WITHOUT

I. ASSESSING THE DEVILS TACTICS

ADEQUACY OF THE ARMOR OF GOD

He is a **DECEIVER** (Ge. 1:13)
He assaults the mind

The Belt of Truth
Sword of the Spirit

He is a **TEMPTER** (Mt. 4:1-11)
He entices the righteous to sin

Shield of Faith
Prayer

He is an **ACCUSER** (Rev. 12:10)
He assaults the conscience

Breastplate of Righteousness

II. UNDERSTANDING THE LEVELS OF EVIL INFLUENCE

Sin a negative dynamic of pride and unrighteousness that corrupts the human spirit, and pervades life, "sin nature" (Ro. 7:18), "flesh" (Gal. 5:24), the old man (Eph. 4:22)

SOLUTION: SANCTIFICATION (Ro. 6:6).

NOTE: Temptation from within is the *primary* influence that corrupts human nature. Satan, *secondarily*, entices people to sin, and then accuses & exploits moral compromise.

Satan a created angel who fell prey to pride, rebelled against God's authority, and operates as an "adversary" to deceive and divert the unregenerate from truth, and to oppress the saints.

"temptation" Matt. 4:1 Enticement, compulsion to sin.

SOLUTION: RESISTANCE (Jas. 4:7, 1 Pet. 5:9)

*General Warfare
Against Believers*

"flaming arrows" Eph. 6:16 External influence of evil spirits intended to entice into sin, attack weaknesses or hinder ministry.

SOLUTION: ARMOR OF GOD (Eph. 6:13-18).

=====

"oppression" Acts 10:38 Persistent, on-going bondage, affliction of body and soul

*Specific Warfare-
Lingering Bondage*

SOLUTION: DELIVERANCE (Acts 10:38)

=====

"control" 1 John 5:19 Dominance of a soul by Satan, either--

--generally (covertly) through deception and disobedience (Rev. 12:9; Eph. 2:2).

--specifically (overtly) Direct control of evil spirits (Mt. 8:28-33)

*Warfare Against
Unbelievers*

SOLUTION: SALVATION (Col. 1:13,14)

III. SYMPTOMS OF SPIRITUAL OPPRESSION

Be aware of your spiritual surroundings. Principalities and powers establish particular strongholds in geographical areas that may directly or indirectly affect the Church and its ministries.

- A. Heaviness: doubt, unbelief
- B. Intimidation: fear, feeling insignificant & impotent...hopelessness
- C. Personal Pressure Points
 - 1. emotional & psychological thorns
 - 2. besetting sins
 - 3. marriage & children
 - 4. finances
- D. Estranged Relationships that Become Obsessive & Oppressive
- E. Dissipation of Vision, Loss of Momentum (discouragement)

As kingdom servants, we can wrestle with a dreaded, unspoken tendency to feel overcome (throw in the towel), rather than rising in faith as overcomers. Relentless assault, in the absence of measurable momentum, can wear down even the best & boldest of warriors (e.g. Elijah, 1 Ki. 1:19).

IV. DEALING WITH FOUR AREAS OF SPIRITUAL ATTACK

A. *Identity Issues* (assault on who I am in Christ)

- 1. key: know who & whose you are: Eph. 3:14-20; 6:17; Ro. 8:28-39

superiority (the devil tempts)
(pride)

- 2. the traps:
 - inferiority* (the devil accuses & oppresses)
(self-pity)

- 3. healing emotional damage, closing doors on the enemy: Is. 61:1-3; Heb. 4:14-16

B. *Sin Stuff* (fiery darts directed at my vulnerabilities)

- 1. the devil looks for “pressure points”
 - a. besetting sins (Heb. 12:1)
 - b. strongholds (2 Cor. 10:5)

A “stronghold” is an entrenched pattern of thought, belief or behavior that is contrary to biblical truth, common to our fallen humanity, and exploitable by satanic forces (e.g., unbelief, heresies, humanistic rationalizations, love of the world, disunity, justifying our sins of envy, jealousy, criticism, covetousness, bitterness, etc.)

- 2. keeping our personal “harbor” clean (Jas. 3:13-4:10)
- 3. admit...submit...”wash your hands & purify your minds”...and resist the devil

C. Grudge Sludge (relationships gone sour)

1. Ephesians 4:27: refusal to confess & cleanse sin opens a door to darkness.
2. how to stay “toxin free”
 - a. admit your “sludge”
 - b. repent, confess, receive cleansing
 - c. recover your ground, and close a door on the devil through prayer
 - d. choose to love & bless the “problem person”

D. Worldliness (pollution from fallen cultural values)

1. James 4:4: the trap of the temporal
2. forsake...break...shake off cultural idolatries (one-on-one or group accountability)

V. IDENTIFYING ENEMY PRESSURE POINTS (PERSONAL)

INFIRMITIES

ADVERSITIES

BESETTING SINS

EMOTIONAL DAMAGE

** Seek God for grace to face issues
and grow in character.*

** His strength is perfected in our
weaknesses.*

** Discernment to resist temptation & reject lies.*

** Strength through deliverance and healing.*

Session #3

KEYS TO WINNING THE BATTLE

I. TIPS FOR OVERCOMING SPIRITUAL DARKNESS

- A. Stand, in Faith, on Scriptural Revelation: Eph. 6:10-20; 2 Cor. 10:3-5; 2 Thess. 3:3; Rev. 12:10-12
- B. Do a Regular Sin & Attitude Check (Jas. 3:13-4:6), and Practice Jas. 4:7-10
- C. Pursue Personal Healing and Sealing of Emotional & Psychological “Cracks”
- D. Seek Covering Prayer from Church Leadership
- E. Put a Personal Prayer Shield in Place: secure 2-3 personal intercessors & brief them!
- F. Engage in the High Praises of the Lord

RECOGNIZE the real source & seriousness of your struggle.

REPENT of any known sin & receive cleansing

RENOUNCE footholds & strongholds

RETURN to the Lord’s mercy & covering

RESIST close the door on enemy lies & accusations

II. GAINING & MAINTAINING VICTORY IN THE TRENCHES

- Learn to *recognize and respond more quickly* to warfare issues
- Regularly *practice “covering” prayer* for yourself, your family and ministry team
- *Raise up intercessors:* muster and mobilize them when under attack
- Commit to persevere through trials and *rejoice in suffering*

The Main, Plain thing of Spiritual Warfare

Ask the Lord to help you discern when you are under spiritual attack. Learn to turn more quickly to Him as your refuge.
Deal with your sin issues, then take up the weapons of the word (truth) and prayer (authority) to proclaim the enemy's defeat, and command his departure.

Our human tendencies...

- To consider everything *but* warfare

Our human tendencies...

- To consider everything *but* warfare
- To press through oppression alone, and in our own strength

Our human tendencies...

- To consider everything *but* warfare
- To press through oppression alone, and in our own strength
- To be tardy and tentative taking authority in prayer

Using Our Weapons of Warfare:
with any sign of spiritual attack--

- **Put up your shield of faith**
 - Defensive (covering)
 - Offensive (extinguish "fiery darts")

Using Our Weapons of Warfare:
with any sign of spiritual attack--

- **Put up your shield of faith**
 - Defensive (covering)
 - Offensive (extinguish "fiery darts")
- **Pray** (call on the name of the Lord)
 - Pre-emptive
 - Pro-active

*There is no right formula for effective prayer.
You need not be oratorically correct.
Just cry out to God from your heart,
And command the enemy to flee.*

Using Our Weapons of Warfare: *with any sign of spiritual attack--*

- **Pick up your sword, and use it!**

- Our model: Jesus in the Wilderness
- Memorize & verbalize the Scriptures
 - Isaiah 54:17
 - Psalm 91
 - Luke 10:17-20
 - 2 Thess 3:3
 - 1 John 3:8
 - Revelation 12:10

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*Standing on & speaking truth
exposes Satan's lies &
releases the power of the Holy Spirit
to drive darkness away.*

Covering our Homes & Families with God's protection

"Let the beloved of the Lord rest secure in Him,
for He shields him all day long,
and the one the Lord loves
rests between His shoulders."
Deut. 33:12

"If you make the Most High your dwelling...
then no harm will befall you...
For He will command His angels concerning you,
to guard you in all your ways."
Psalm 91:9-11

In your home... whether roommates or family

- Be honest about your "pressure points" & vulnerabilities
- Talk about things effecting your mind, moods & behavior
- Learn to discern enemy oppression more accurately & quickly, and use the weapons of warfare.

Advice from a man who was seriously "sifted" by the devil

"Be self-controlled and alert.
Your enemy the devil prowls around
like a roaring lion looking for
someone to devour.

Resist him,
standing firm in the faith..."

1 Peter 5:8, 9

How We Become Vulnerable to the Enemy

- Basic ignorance of warfare realities
- Listening to lies (doubt & unbelief)
- Indulging our besetting sins
- Holding on to resentment, bitterness, anger in relationships
- Giving in to fear or worry

Session # 4

SETTING CAPTIVES FREE: Reaching the Lost Through Spiritual Warfare

FOLLOWING JESUS' MODEL

*"Do you want God to hear and answer your prayers?
Then begin to pray for 'sheep #100!'"*
Ed Silvano

Premise: Jesus modeled a life of devotional prayer and dependence on the Father and the Holy Spirit. Sensitive to people, his life bore spontaneous, lasting fruit. Following the guiding principle of his ministry, "I do only what I see the Father doing," Jesus was--

-- **Spirit-led** in his contact with people--

- * flowed out of a consistent personal prayer life (Mk. 1:35; Lu. 5:16)
- * recognized a power greater than himself--

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" Jo. 6:44

-- **sinner friendly** ("Lord, deliver us from religiosity!")

- * the good Samaritan (Lu. 10:25-37)
- * Zaccheus (Lu. 19:1-9)

-- **sensitive** to people's struggles, available to meet real needs (Mk. 5:21ff)

-- **sincere:** honest, compassionate exchange with the woman at the well (Jo. 4)

-- **straightforward:** "nailed" the rich young ruler (Mk. 10:17-22)

-- **sower of seeds** of truth (Mk. 4:1-20)

Pattern: Jesus compassionately tuned into people's needs, weaknesses and fears. He was always available to pray for their healing, deliverance, and comfort. He offered substantive hope from a God who cares. The response--people willingly choose to follow him and walk in his truth.

KINGDOM EVANGELISM--

"Everyone has their windows of opportunity, their seasons of openness. At any given moment, people we encounter each day are in the midst of such a season. If we could only tell which ones! Perhaps we *can*.. This is the basic premise of "kingdom evangelism...**if we are attentive and docile to the leadings of the Holy Spirit, he will lead us to people whom he has prepared, at the right time, under the right circumstances, with the right message.** Thus the question becomes not so much how to find people to evangelize, but how to let the Lord direct us to the people in whom he is already at work, and how to play the role he wants us to play in their spiritual growth." John Blattner

THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE DIMENSION OF PRAYER EVANGELISM

"I am sending you to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me." Acts 26:17,18

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

I. RE-THINKING OUR APPROACH TO OUTREACH

- A. Building Relational Trust (loving, caring, bearing)
- B. Understanding Worldview Issues (discerning the cultural mindset)
- C. Releasing Power through Prayer (believing that God does what we cannot do)

II. CHECKING OUR MOTIVATION (2 Cor. 5:11-21)

- A. Am I compelled by conviction that the lost will really inherit hell?
- B. Am I overcome by compassion?
- C. Am I willing to be available as an ambassador?

III. RECOGNIZING BONDAGES OF UNBELIEF *An ambassador will help unbelievers to--*

- A. The World: 1 John 2:15 IDOLATRY **Reject** False Values
- B. The Flesh: John 3:19 SELFISHNESS **Repent** of Sin
- C. The Devil: Ephesians 2:2 DISOBEDIENCE **Resist** the Deceiver, **Receive** the Savior

IV. DISCERNING SPIRITUAL STRONGHOLDS

In Jesus' parable of the seed and the sower, we observe a variety of responses to sowing seeds of truth. In Jesus' words with Nicodemus, we understand that why one receives and another does not is a mystery (John 3:8). Interpreting His parable, our Lord identifies the "birds" that snatch up the seed as the workers of the evil one. ***The invisible influence of evil spirits is thus a part of the resistance factor in leading people to truth.*** In the Parable of the Weeds, Jesus also describes the intentional planting of "weeds" among the wheat (Mt. 13:24-30). "The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil" (13:38b). So, ***the devil not only hinders genuine conversions, but also promotes the cultivation of counterfeit conversions.***

Paul states clearly that "the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:4). Describing the pre-conversion state, Paul tells the Ephesian believers that they once "followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient" (Eph. 2:2). In Jesus' commission to Paul, he is given a role of turning the lost "from the power of Satan to God." ***One misunderstood and unpracticed element of evangelism is spiritual warfare. The church must learn to move in spiritual authority that pierces deception and breaks bondages of evil that keep souls hostage to the evil one.***

In presenting truth to people, we are not only dealing with the human will, cultural values, and intellectual objections. We also wrestle against an enemy that blinds people with a smokescreen. The "god of this world" pollutes the mind and perverts the will. We can only penetrate this spiritual "air pollution" by releasing God's power through authoritative, Spirit-anointed prayer.

V. TURNING PEOPLE FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

A. *Pray in Agreement with the Lord's Will*

Paul reveals that God "wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). In Peter's words, He is "not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Pe. 3:9). Doctrinal issues of election vs. free will aside, I believe we must take these passages at face value and pray in confidence for the salvation of each person the Lord brings across our path or puts on our hearts.

B. *Pray for an Opening of the Heart, and Conviction*

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to work in this person's mind, heart and will, to--

- a. **stir** desire to seek salvation (Lydia, Acts 16:14)
- b. **soften** resistance to truth
- c. plant & water **seeds** of truth
- d. make a person **sick** of their sin

2. Recognize the privilege and power of willful choice to persist in sin and self-will (Jo. 3:19), and to remain in bondage to the devil's influence (Jo. 8:43,44).

C. *Pray for Open Doors*

1. Enlist prayer that God would open doors for the Word (Col. 4:3; Eph. 6:19).
2. Believe there is power in the Word of God: Ps. 119:130; Is. 55:11; Ro. 10:17.
3. Be ready to share personal testimony: Ps. 40:1-3; Col. 4:3; Acts 26:28,29.
4. Follow the Spirit's promptings: be sensitive to "divine appointments," nudges of the Spirit to reveal Christ to a soul ("be prepared to give answer," 1 Pet. 3:15).

PRAYING FOR OURSELVES...

1. _____ Matt. 9:37-38; 2 Cor. 5
2. Repent of our _____ Eph. 6:19
3. _____ Acts 4:19
4. _____ Col.4:5, 6
5. _____ Luke 10:17-20

PRAYING FOR THE UNSAVED (OR BACKSLIDDEN CHRISTIANS)

- 1. _____ "With God, all things are possible" Mk. 10:27
- 2. _____ 1 Tim. 2:5, 6; 2 Cor. 5:14; Rev. 5:1-10
- 3. _____ John 6:44 Ask & believe the Lord to open hearts
- 4. _____ John 16:8 * _____.
- * _____.
- * _____.

Only the Spirit can open a heart to respond to truth (Acts 2:37; 10:44)

- 5. _____ Acts 17. _____ of the _____.
- 6. _____ 2 Cor. 10:3-5; Acts 26:17, 18
- * _____
- * _____
- * _____

*As ambassadors, it is our responsibility
and privilege to fight for the souls
for whom Jesus gave his life.*

VI. HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATION: James Fraser