

Spirit Warfare: The Invisible War

Dr. John Carmichael

[Eph 6:10-12 NASB95] 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. 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.]

- Most people understand that there are battles in life. We battle sickness, financial pressure, relationship problems, temptation, discouragement, and disappointment. What many fail to recognize is that behind some of the visible struggles of life there is an invisible spiritual conflict taking place.
- The Bible presents a worldview that includes both the natural and the supernatural. Scripture neither denies the existence of spiritual warfare nor exaggerates it. Instead, it calls believers to live with spiritual awareness, biblical discernment, and confidence in Christ.
- Some Christians fall into materialism and act as though only the physical world exists. Others fall into superstition and blame every inconvenience on a demon. God's Word calls us to neither extreme.
- The purpose of this message is not to create fear but faith; not fascination with darkness but confidence in Christ.

If there is an unseen spiritual battle taking place around us, how should believers understand it and respond to it biblically?

The Scriptures reveal five foundational truths that help us understand the reality of spiritual warfare and walk in Christ's victory.

I. Spiritual Warfare Is a Biblical Reality

- a. [Eph 6:10-12 NASB95] 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. 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.]
- b. [Dan 10:12-13 NASB95] 12 Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding [this] and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. 13 "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.
- c. The Bible clearly teaches that there is an unseen spiritual realm. Paul describes organized spiritual opposition. Daniel provides a glimpse behind the curtain, revealing spiritual conflict that affected events on earth.
- d. Spiritual warfare is not a doctrine invented by modern preachers. It is woven throughout Scripture.
- e. From the temptation of Eve, to Satan's attack on Job, to Christ's temptation in the wilderness, to the warfare language of the Epistles, the Bible consistently acknowledges spiritual conflict.
- f. Application: Believers must develop a biblical worldview that recognizes both the natural and supernatural dimensions of life.
- g. We should not ignore what Scripture clearly teaches simply because it cannot be seen with physical eyes.

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II. Not Everything Is Spiritual Warfare

- a. [Gal 6:7 NASB95] 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.
- b. [Pro 24:30-34 NASB95] 30 I passed by the field of the sluggard And by the vineyard of the man lacking sense, 31 And behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles; Its surface was covered with nettles, And its stone wall was broken down. 32 When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked, [and] received instruction. 33 "A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest," 34 Then your poverty will come [as] a robber And your want like an armed man.
- c. While spiritual warfare is real, not every problem is caused by demonic activity.
- d. Sometimes people experience consequences because of poor decisions, lack of discipline, unhealthy habits, or living in a fallen world.
- e. The devil should not receive credit for every flat tire, every disagreement, or every bad decision.
- f. Biblical maturity requires discernment.
- g. Application: Before blaming spiritual forces, honestly evaluate your own choices, attitudes, habits, and responsibilities.
- h. Ask: Is this spiritual opposition? Is this a consequence of my decisions? Is this simply part of living in a fallen world?
- i. Wisdom helps us distinguish the difference.

III. Some Things Are Spiritual Warfare

- a. [1Pe 5:8-9 NASB95] 8 Be of sober [spirit,] be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 But resist him, firm in [your] faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.
- b. [2Co 10:3-5 NASB95] 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,
- c. While not everything is spiritual warfare, some things genuinely are.
- d. The enemy seeks to: Tempt believers; Promote deception; Encourage discouragement; Attack faith; Oppose God's purposes
- e. Paul speaks of strongholds, arguments, and thoughts that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God.
- f. Many spiritual battles occur in the realm of thinking, believing, and obedience.
- g. Application: Learn to recognize spiritual attacks that seek to: Draw you away from God; Distort truth; Weaken faith; Create division; Promote sin
- h. Respond with Scripture, prayer, obedience, and dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

IV. Ignoring the Battle Does Not Exempt Us From It

- a. [1Pe 5:8-9 NASB95] 8 Be of sober [spirit,] be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 But resist him, firm in [your] faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.
- b. [Hos 4:6 NASB95] 6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.
- c. Whether we acknowledge spiritual warfare or not, Scripture says the conflict exists.

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- d. A soldier who ignores the battlefield is not safer because he refuses to recognize the war.
- e. Peter commands believers to remain alert because spiritual opposition is real.
- f. Many Christians suffer unnecessary defeat because they are spiritually asleep.
- g. Application: Develop spiritual awareness through: Prayer; Bible study; Fellowship; Worship; Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit
- h. A vigilant believer is far more effective than a careless believer.

V. Christ Has Already Provided Victory

- a. [Col 2:15 NASB95] 15 When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.
- b. [Eph 1:20-22 NASB95] 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly [places,] 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,
- c. The focus of spiritual warfare is not the power of Satan but the victory of Jesus.
- d. At the Cross and through His resurrection, Christ defeated the powers of darkness.
- e. Believers do not fight for victory; they fight from victory.
- f. The enemy is real, but he is not equal to God.
- g. Jesus is exalted far above all rule, authority, power, and dominion.
- h. Application: When facing spiritual opposition: Stand in Christ's authority. Declare God's Word. Remain faithful. Walk in obedience. Trust the Holy Spirit.
- i. Confidence belongs to those who know who Christ is and who they are in Him.
- j. The Holy Spirit equips believers to discern and overcome spiritual opposition.
- k. Jesus promised power through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). The Spirit provides wisdom, discernment, strength, boldness, and spiritual sensitivity for every battle we face.
- l. The answer to spiritual warfare is not fear, superstition, or obsession with darkness. The answer is a Spirit-filled life centered on Christ.

- **Believers must recognize the reality of spiritual warfare, discern it biblically, and stand confidently in the victory Christ has already won.**
- The invisible war is real. Scripture teaches that spiritual conflict exists.
- Jesus Christ has conquered the enemy. The Holy Spirit empowers believers. The Word of God provides truth. Prayer connects us with heaven's resources.
- We do not live in fear of darkness. We live in confidence because Christ is Lord.
- Prayer for Spiritual Awareness; Prayer for Those Facing Spiritual Opposition; Prayer for Renewed Confidence in Christ; Fresh Filling of the Holy Spirit