

Some Basic Truths About Spiritual Warfare

Message 01 of 04 in the series: "Spiritual Warfare"

A. We are involved in a spiritual battle against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world.

"...Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. **For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.** Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm."

Ephesians 6:10-13 (NLT)

"Time and again Elisha warned the king, so that he would be on the alert there. The king of Aram became very upset over this. He called his officers together and demanded, 'Which of you is the traitor? Who has been informing the king of Israel of my plans?' 'It's not us, my lord the king,' one of the officers replied. 'Elisha, the prophet in Israel, tells the king of Israel even the words you speak in the privacy of your bedroom!' ...When the servant of the man of God got up early the next morning and went outside, there were troops, horses, and chariots everywhere. 'Oh, sir, what will we do now?' the young man cried to Elisha. 'Don't be afraid!' Elisha told him. 'For there are more on our side than on theirs!' Then Elisha prayed, **'O LORD, open his eyes and let him see!'** **The LORD opened the young man's eyes, and when he looked up, he saw that the hillside around Elisha was filled with horses and chariots of fire.**" 2 Kings 6:10b-12 & 15-17 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! If we are blind to spiritual realities, only the Holy Spirit can open our eyes to see them. "When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths. **But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means.**" 1 Corinthians 2:13-14 (NLT)

B. The devil is a real and formidable adversary.

"Satan" = "adversary" or "enemy."

"Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour." 1 Peter 5:8 (NLT)

1. Satan is the god of this world. **"Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe.** They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God." 2 Corinthians 4:4 (NLT)
2. Satan knows exactly how to tempt/discourage/frighten us because he used to be our boss. **"You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world.** He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God." Ephesians 2:2 (NLT)
3. Satan is a master of deception. **"Satan disguises himself** as an angel of light." 2 Corinthians 11:14b (NLT)

IMPORTANT! Spiritual warfare is NOT a game. "A group of Jews was traveling from town to town casting out evil spirits. They tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus in their incantation, saying, 'I command you in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, to come out!' Seven sons of Sceva, a leading priest, were doing this. But one time when they tried it, the evil spirit replied, **'I know Jesus, and I know Paul, but who are you?'** **Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, overpowered them, and attacked them with such violence that they fled from the house, naked and battered.**" Acts 19:13-16 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! We must take the devil seriously, but we DO NOT need to fear him. "...He who is in you is **greater** than he who is in the world." 1 John 4:4b (NKJV)

C. God has given us spiritual armor and mighty spiritual weapons so we can stand our ground.

"We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. **We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments.** We

destroy every proud obstacle (imagination and every high thing) that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NLT)

“Therefore, put on every piece of God’s armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God’s righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”
Ephesians 6:13-17 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! With God’s armor and weapons, we will be able to stand our ground on the battlefield of our minds. **“So prepare your minds for action** and exercise self-control. Put all your hope in the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world. So you must live as God’s obedient children. **Don’t slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires.** You didn’t know any better then. But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy.”
1 Peter 1:13-15 (NLT)

D. We have angelic allies.

1. An angel protected Daniel from the lions. “Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lions’ den. When he got there, he called out in anguish, ‘Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?’ Daniel answered, ‘Long live the king! **My God sent his angel to shut the lions’ mouths so that they would not hurt me,** for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty.’”
Daniel 6:19-22 (NLT)
2. An angel protected Joseph, Mary, and baby Jesus from murderous King Herod. “After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. ‘**Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother,**’ the angel said. ‘Stay there until I tell you to return, because **Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.**’ That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, and they stayed there until Herod’s death.” Matthew 2:13-15a (NLT)

IMPORTANT! We have angels protecting us, too! “For the angel of the Lord is a guard; **he surrounds and defends all who fear him.**” Psalm 34:7 (NLT)

E. We can face painful and confusing spiritual battles in our fallen world with honesty and hope.

“But as for you, **you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good,** in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.” Genesis 50:20 (NKJV)

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ...No, **in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,** neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:35 & 37-39 (NIV)

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Connect Group Questions:

1. What does “spiritual warfare” mean to you? Share a spiritual battle you have been through. How did you handle it?
2. Read 1 Peter 5:8, 2 Corinthians 4:4 & 11:14, & Ephesians 2:2. Why do you think the devil is so good at tempting/confusing/frightening us?
3. Read Acts 19:13-16 & 1 John 4:4. What does it look like for a Bible believing Christian to take the devil seriously without being afraid of him?
4. Read 2 Kings 6:8-17. Why was Elisha’s servant afraid? What changed his perspective? How does the Holy Spirit change our perspective on confusing, painful spiritual battles? (1 Corinthians 2:13-14, Genesis 50:20, Romans 8:35-39)
5. How does it make you feel to hear that our minds are spiritual battlefields? (2 Corinthians 10:3-5, 1 Peter 1:13-15)

6. How does it make you feel to hear that we have angelic allies? (Daniel 6:19-22, Matthew 2:13-15, Psalm 34:7)
7. Discuss the following quotation: "There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors..." C.S. Lewis in *The Screwtape Letters*