

Spiritual Warfare

Putting on the Armor of God

By Christian Equippers International

We Are at War

Jesus announced that His followers would "overcome all the powers of the enemy" (Mk. 16:17; Lk. 10:19). His first disciples, the early church, and saints throughout the church age have exercised this spiritual authority.

The simple fact that we are children of God makes us targets of Satan's evil schemes. His sole purpose is to destroy us and prevent the glorious, eternal destiny God has planned for us with Himself (Ps. 139:14-18). As we seek to live for God and glorify Jesus Christ, we will find ourselves at war with the invisible, spiritual forces of evil in this world and in the heavenly realms (Eph. 6:12). Spiritual warfare is a fact of life on this planet until the Lord returns.

As we strive to advance God's Kingdom purposes, Satan increases his efforts against us. It is critical that we understand what God says about our enemy and his methods, and prepare ourselves to effectively stand against him. This booklet describes the spiritual armor given to every believer and defines the basic elements of successful spiritual warfare.

Who is the Enemy?

The New Testament frequently reminds us that we have a spiritual enemy (Mt. 6:13; 2 Cor. 11:3). Peter warns us to be "sober and vigilant" concerning this enemy, whom he clearly identifies as the devil (I Pet. 5:8). Unless we realize who our enemy is and what his tactics are, he will have a great strategic advantage over us.

Satan was a powerful, high-ranking angel who rebelled against God and led a group of angels (demons) (Jude 6) to follow him (Rev. 12:7). He was cast down to the earth and resides here today (Lk. 10:18). The Bible ascribes many different descriptive titles to Satan: accuser (Rev. 12:10), prince of power (Eph. 2:2), wicked one (Mt. 13:19), adversary (I Pet. 5:8), serpent (Gen. 3:4), cunning (Gen. 3:1), murderer (Jn. 8:44), father of lies (Jn. 8:44), ruler of this world (Jn. 14:30).

Satan has three main, strategic objectives:

1) Keep unbelievers in the dark. Jesus calls us to preach the gospel to the unredeemed in order to bring them to light, truth and deliverance, but Satan's strategy is to do everything he can to prevent this (2 Cor. 4:4).

2) Render believers spiritually ineffective. Not only does Satan want to rob the child of God of the enjoyment of salvation and effectiveness of service, his aim is to devour us (I Pet. 5:9). The root meaning of the word devour is "to swallow." Satan tries to bring us into temptation and bondage, and get us so swallowed up in worldly, self-centered living that we turn away from God.

3) Hinder God's work in the world. In I Thess. 2:18, Paul wrote that he attempted to come to them many times, but "Satan hindered us." In Eph. 6, Paul characterizes Christian life and ministry as struggling against the demonic powers in the world.

Conflict in the Christian Life Comes From Four Sources:

The flesh (Mk. 7:20-23, Gal. 5:19-21), life circumstances (Jn. 16:33), the world system (Jas. 4:4, I Jn. 2:15-17), and the devil (Eph. 6:10-12, I Pet. 5:8). When difficulties come, it is not always easy to identify the source of the conflict. We need discernment to identify which of our trials and problems are a result of a spiritual attack, because we are not to be ignorant of the enemies devices (2 Cor. 2:11). We need to know when we are at war, and when it's time to stand!

How Do We Know Satan is Attacking Us?

What Are Satan's Tactics?

Deceit: Jesus said that when the devil lies he speaks out of his very nature (Jn 8:44). He first appears in the Bible in Gen. 3 using deception to lure Adam and Eve into sin (Cor. 11:3). In Rev. 12:9 he is called the one "who deceives the whole world."

Accusation: Satan is called the "accuser of the brethren" (Rev. 12:10). He accuses us to God and to ourselves. God convicts us of sin and shows us how to deal with it through the Cross. But Satan accuses us to discourage us and make us give up.

Capitalizing on weakness: A standard tactic of the devil is to find a weakness in our lives and intensify it to a compulsive level (I Pet. 5:8).

Oppression through demonization: In demonization, a demon holds some measure of control over a person. The demons establish strongholds in people — both Christians and non-Christians (II Cor. 10:4,5)

Physical affliction: Sometimes, Satan will attack the physical body with illness, afflictions or injury (Mt. 9:32; Lk. 13:16).

What Must We Do?

The main Bible passage on how to resist Satan is Ephesians 6:10-18. Here we find clear instructions on how to resist Satan by putting on the armor of God and using our spiritual weapons.

"Be strong in The Lord and in The Power of His Might" (Eph. 6:11): Paul begins with this command. Earlier, in Eph. 1:19-22 and 3:20, Paul speaks of the vast resources of God's power—the same power God used to raise Christ from the dead and enthrone Him in the heavenly realms, high above all other powers. According to Eph. 3:16-17, we share this position of power because we've been raised up and seated with Christ. We are strong for battle because Christ strengthened us through His Spirit, who is within us. We don't have to strive toward a possible victory; we can live from a position of victory already won by Christ. But, we must actively choose His power rather than our own. Our focus is on being strong in the Lord who has overcome Satan's evil powers, on wearing the armor, and on remaining steadfast until the battle is over.

This is an excerpt from the booklet: *Spiritual Warfare* by Christian Equippers International, too purchase this full teaching visit www.equipper.com