

A Call to Spiritual Warfare

Spiritual War

In America, the Church seems to be blinded in many ways to spiritual reality because of the cultural influence of our times. Our society is one of reason, science, and rational thought biased by humanism. As a consequence, the invisible spiritual reality is considered the stuff of myths and not worthy of consideration by a rational person. Even though Jesus spent about a third of His ministry casting out demons, it is not considered necessary in our day and age because we have learned better ways of dealing with psychological problems (this is the way that humanism thinks of demons)!

We need to have our eyes opened, our understanding enlightened. Whether we recognize it or not we are in the middle of spiritual battles that are part of a spiritual war. This war has already been won by Jesus, but the enemy still sends guerrilla raids to attack key points and infiltrates the Church with terrorist tactics, deceiving and blinding the minds of many. We must fight the enemy in skirmishes and battles in order to securely occupy the territory that Jesus purchased for us with His blood.

We are no different than the Children of Israel who had to take the Promised Land. God had given them the land--it was theirs, yet they had to walk on it to possess it¹. Walking on it wasn't easy because it was still occupied by others who considered it theirs. To possess the land required fighting--not just individually but corporately as the people of God. It also required God-given strategy on how to proceed, where to attack first, what methods to use, and other strategic information.

Notice too that the mind-set is offensive not defensive. They had to TAKE the land, not sit back passively and wait for something to happen. The tribes that wanted to settle on the wrong side of Jordan (assuming that they would not have to fight) were required by God to still go with their brothers and fight to possess the land. They couldn't return home until the fighting was done because God would not allow them to be at peace while their brothers were at war.² How we need to learn this lesson today!

Ownership in the Land

Under the New Covenant we have a Land of Promises (spiritual territory) instead of a Promised Land (geographical territory). We own the land--Jesus purchased it with His blood and then gave it to us--"for all the promises of God are in Him, amen!"³ However, there are those who think (evil spiritual beings) that it is their territory. Which means that we too must fight in order to

1 Joshua 1:2-6

2 Joshua 1:12-15

3 2 Cor. 1:20

possess the land and make the promises of God reality in us. Our fighting must also be done both individually and corporately. We cannot settle down and rest while our brothers go to war.

Jesus said in Matt 11:12, "...the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." (KJV). That means that we can't passively wait for the promises of God to just happen to us but we have to get "violent" about the things of God. Why violent? The scripture says that the Kingdom of God is peace, joy and righteousness in the Holy Ghost⁴ and that it pleases the Father to give us the Kingdom!⁵ If it is a gift why do we need to "take it by force"? The answer is the same for us as it was for the Children of Israel taking the Promised Land. We must understand the difference between the legal (I do give) and the experiential (wherever you put your feet).⁶

By grace through faith God has given us the gift of salvation.⁷ This qualifies us as Children of God to receive the promises of God. However, if you read the scriptures, it seems that the promises all have conditions and many of those conditions are "to him that overcometh". What are we overcoming? Is it the world system dominated by Satan? The ways of God are not the ways of the world. Could it be that one of the reasons that our lives reflect so few of the promises of God is because we are not *overcoming* the world system but instead are *cooperating* with it?

Jesus is going to rule until all of His enemies have been put under His feet and then He will turn the Kingdom over to the Father.⁸ That means, right now, there are some enemies in the Kingdom that have to be subdued! Who is charged with subduing the enemies of Christ? WE ARE!

Occupation Troops

Jesus told us to "occupy till I come".⁹ We are the occupation troops of God's army. We are to clean up the land and remove pockets of rebellion, residual enemy troops that harass, and strongholds of the enemy. Remember, the Commander-in-Chief of the enemy has been defeated and disarmed by our Commander-in-Chief (Jesus), but he has not yet been bound. The enemy's troops don't surrender unless they are forced to through the authority of the Name of Jesus.

How do we "occupy"? First, on a personal level we have to take possession of the things that belong to the Kingdom of God--the promises of God have to become the reality in which we live. Second, on a corporate level we have to determine the "spiritual geography" of the area where we live for the purpose of taking "spiritual territory" away from the enemy.

Do you realize that we can take or yield territory to the enemy? In Ephesians 4:27 we are told to not "give place to the devil." The Greek word translated "place" is *topos* which means territory, location, office or area of jurisdiction. We get our word "topology" from this word, which is in

4 Romans 14:17

5 Luke 12:32

6 Joshua 1:3

7 Eph. 2:8

8 1 Cor. 15:25-28

9 Luke 19:13

keeping with its definition. A topological map is a good illustration of its meaning. Therefore, we can lose territory (and/or jurisdiction) to the enemy!

What territory are we losing? The promises of the Kingdom of God. How do we lose it? We give up territory to the enemy whenever we allow the things listed in these scriptures to continue in our life:

Eph 4:25-30 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor ... Be ye angry, and sin not ... Neither give place to the devil ... Let him that stole steal no more ... Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth ... And grieve not the holy Spirit of God ... (KJV)

A Soldier's Life

Timothy is a good example of one called as a soldier.

1 Tim 1:18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; (KJV)

His charge, calling, commission was to "war a good warfare". This was to be done through the prophecies that had been given to him before.

2 Tim 2:3-4 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. (KJV)

From this we see that the life of a soldier is different from the life of a civilian. A soldier endures hardship. A soldier doesn't get entangled in the affairs of life but is focused on pleasing his Superior.

Most of the Church treats this calling as if it doesn't involve them personally. During the Gulf War and now the Iraq War most of us did not participate. We sat on our couches and watched it on CNN. In Church, we sit on the pews and watch and listen to missionaries and others who have been on the front lines and react in about the same way that we did watching the Gulf War on CNN--do what you have to, just don't inconvenience me!

I personally believe that if we are not gaining ground for the Kingdom of God then we are losing it to the kingdom of darkness. We **CAN'T** sit and watch. We are participants whether we like it or not. Let's arm ourselves with the Word of God and "occupy till" He comes leading the armies of Heaven for the final battle.

Spiritual Enemies

Remember, we are fighting for "spiritual territory" therefore our enemies are spiritual also.

Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (KJV)

These enemies take the form of "principalities", "powers", "rulers of darkness", "spiritual wickedness (wicked spirits)" in high (literally, the heavenlies) places. (*Places* is not in the original but was added by the translators).

We could, by looking at the original Greek text, say that we wrestle (fight) against principalities and the realms (jurisdiction) of their authority; against the Chiefs of the world who have used their strength to seize and retain darkness; against wicked spirits in the heavenlies.

The Heavenlies

The scriptures refer to the place of the Throne Room of God as the Heaven of Heavens. God made the heaven and the heaven of heavens.¹⁰ Paul spoke of a man caught up to the third heaven.¹¹ It then stands to reason that there must be a heaven 1 and a heaven 2 or the man could not be caught up to heaven 3.

Where are these heavenlies? Heaven one is probably what we see when we look at the night sky—the heaven of our universe. I believe heaven three to be the dwelling place of God—the heaven of heavens. That leaves heaven two—the mid heaven. This is the dwelling place of principalities and is the seat of their authority or jurisdiction. When Lucifer rose in rebellion against God, he took about a third of the Angels with him.¹² In quelling this rebellion, these Angels (and Lucifer's seat of authority) were removed from the Heaven of Heavens. They were forced out of the presence of God and into the mid-heaven where they set up their seats of power and wickedness to prevent men from worshipping or glorifying the true God. They created a rival kingdom in opposition to God.

Angels and Demons

It is these fallen angels that are our enemies and, of course, Satan who is THE enemy. There is a hierarchy of authority for the kingdom of darkness that is designed to carry out the will of Satan. The fallen angels make up the chiefs and princes of this hierarchy and have areas of jurisdiction or realms of authority. They develop strategy and oversee the foot soldiers to make sure that their purposes are being carried out. The foot soldiers are demons.

Demons and fallen angels are not the same. Angels never try to possess a body--they already have a spiritual body. And we know from scripture that angels can manifest themselves to us in their own body. Also, Angels tend to operate in the heavenlies. Demons, on the other hand, operate in an earthly context and are always trying to get a body (they apparently don't have their

¹⁰ Neh. 9:6

¹¹ 2 Cor. 12:2

¹² Rev. 12:4

own). They desire a body so much that if they are about to be cast out of a person they would choose to go into pigs instead of having no body.¹³ After being cast out, a demon will return later and try to re-inhabit the body that he left. If he finds it clean and swept, he will invite seven other demons to come and live with him in his new, clean home.¹⁴

This says to me that at one time demons had bodies or they wouldn't desire one so much. We don't know for sure what happened to their bodies, but, I believe that the earth was under the jurisdiction of Lucifer before he rebelled and that the earth had living creatures on it. I believe that these creatures also rose in rebellion with Lucifer and the group of rebellious angels. When God judged the rebellion, judgment also fell on the earth and its inhabitants. The earth was utterly wiped of life. The creatures living at that time became the demons of today—dis-embodied spirits with no place to go until the final judgment and the Lake of Fire.¹⁵

Whether you agree with this scenario or not is not important to this particular study. It is still obvious that fallen angels and demons are not the same thing. From the scriptures we see that we cast out demons but we wrestle against principalities and powers. Our approach is different. We deal with demons by casting them out with the command word of the authority of the Name of Jesus. We deal with principalities by the type of prayer that causes us to contest (in the Name of Jesus) their jurisdiction—the realms of their rulership. We wrestle away from them spiritual territory over which they have control.

Territorial Spirits

Because the fallen angels have seats of power and realms of jurisdiction, it appears that many of them are assigned to different portions of the earth to further the purposes of Satan. This is clearly seen in Daniel.

Dan 10:12-13 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. (KJV)

Dan 10:20-21 Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince. (KJV)

It is obvious that the Prince of the Kingdom of Persia is not a man, for what man could hold back one of God's angels for twenty-one days? This Prince, then, must be a principality with the

¹³ Matt. 8:31

¹⁴ Matt. 12:43-45

¹⁵ For further study of this topic see "Present Truth Volume 3 Issue 11-12 and Volume 4 Issue 1-2" available on the website www.lifestreamteaching.com

jurisdiction of Persia as his area of control. Also mentioned in these verses is the prince of Greece--another Satanic principality responsible for Greece. This clearly establishes the fact that in the kingdom of darkness there are territories ruled over by principalities. They consider these territories theirs just like the giants considered the Promised Land as belonging to them. We must occupy these spiritual territories and ultimately rule them for Christ.

Notice too, that God's angel referred to Michael as one of the chief princes (of God's angels) and also as "your prince" implying that Michael has responsibility before God for Daniel's people--the Jews. In this we can see that it is possible for angels to have jurisdiction that involves ethnic groups. That means that fallen angels can also be responsible for ethnic groups as well as territories.

It is also clear in chapter 28 of Ezekiel that there are two different beings referred to as the *prince* of Tyre (Tyre) and the *king* of Tyre (Tyre). The scriptures explicitly state that the prince of Tyre, though he thinks of himself as God, is a man. However, the description of the king of Tyre is such that he can't be a man. No man has ever been in the mineral Garden of Eden, nor been responsible for covering, nor been on the mountain of God, nor walked up and down among the stones of fire.

Most scholars believe this picture of the king of Tyre to be a description of Lucifer, himself. The prince of Tyre (a man) then obviously thought of himself as God because of the influence of the king of Tyre (Lucifer, or a powerful fallen angel). People and territories that are under Satan's principalities tend to take on the characteristics of the ruling power.

You would not normally think that a place like Tyre would be important enough that the Devil himself would rule over it. However, there are some interesting parallels between Tyre (as listed here) and Babylon in Revelation 18. Could it be that the driving force behind these two cities is Satan himself? After all, Tyre had a physical ruler who thought of himself as god, Babylon will have the Antichrist who also thinks of himself as god. These are the same characteristics exhibited by Lucifer because he wanted to be god, too.

We do know from Revelation 2 that the church in Pergamos was in the place where Satan's seat is and where he dwells. His seat is his place of authority. It is interesting that the Pergamos Church was full of heresies and false teaching, probably from the influence of Satan's seat of power. Again, people (even in the Church) taking on the characteristics of the ruling spiritual powers.

We can see that cities are important to God when we realize that God has chosen Jerusalem as His city. And in the future even a New Jerusalem for all of us to dwell in. The enemy has also chosen his city--Babylon. One could almost say that the events of the end times are controlled by these two cities! Certainly, God's seat of power will be in New Jerusalem and Satan's seat will be in Babylon the Great.

Can you see now why "spiritual geography" is important? There are territorial spirits ruling over various sections of the earth and, possibly, over ethnic groups. Their sole purpose is to further the purposes of the Devil—to steal, kill and destroy—to prevent people from glorifying or

worshiping God. We are to wrestle, fight, do battle with these spirits for their territory--to bring the Kingdom of God in power,¹⁶ to set the captives free.

Thy Kingdom Come

We know we are bringing the Kingdom of God to an area when we begin casting out devils. Jesus said, "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the Kingdom of God is come unto you."¹⁷ God's Kingdom is always manifested in conflict with the kingdom of darkness. Could it be that we have difficulty in stirring faith toward God in people in some areas because we didn't bring the Kingdom of God in power. After all, the scriptures say that "the Kingdom is not in word but in power"¹⁸. In other words, you don't just talk it—you show it.

The Lord told us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come...in earth as it is in Heaven."¹⁹ How does it come? Through us as the ambassadors of Christ. We carry the Kingdom of God in us wherever we go.

Now, the Kingdom is in mystical form in the hearts of people, but, in the fullness of time, Jesus will return and establish His Kingdom in physical form.

The scriptures define the Kingdom of God as peace, joy, and righteousness in the Holy Ghost.²⁰ These attributes are the result of our submission to the King. Any kingdom takes on the characteristics of its King. The Kingdom of God is no different. The character and power of our King is resident in His Kingdom.

Every kingdom (including the Kingdom of God) has order and structure in order to function properly. There are always various levels of rulers, judges, administrators, etc. in order to accomplish the work of the King. We are even promised positions of rulership in God's Kingdom if we persevere and overcome.²¹

It stands to reason that if the enemy has territorial spirits and a hierarchy of authority then certainly God has a structure of order that includes angels over territories to help the people of God. The scriptures call them "ministering spirits" that help the heirs of salvation.²²

God is doing His job. The angels are doing their job. Then, why is there such resistance to the truth of the Gospel of salvation? Even in the Church there seems to be a lack of true commitment to Jesus? This is happening because we, the believers, are the ones who are failing! We are the foot soldiers of the Lord. It is our job to attack and overcome the enemy—to extend the Kingdom of God. We do this with a two fold battle plan. First, we wrestle with the

16 1 Cor. 4:20

17 Luke 11:20

18 1 Cor. 2:20

19 Matt. 6:10

20 Romans 14:17

21 Rev. 20:6

22 Heb. 1:13-14

principalities until victory is gained, then we carry the word of freedom to those that were held captive. Why aren't we doing it?

There are three reasons:

1. For some, it is because they don't know that we are at war. They live in ignorance of spiritual things.
2. Others know that there is a war going on, but the front lines are a long way away and so it doesn't concern them much. After all, they are sure that someone else has been called to do that sort of stuff.
3. Then there are those who know that we are at war and who know that they should be doing something, but don't have a clue about what they should do. As a result, a few feeble attempts are made to seek God's will, but eventually apathy sets in and they become non-productive for the Kingdom of God.

According to the scriptures, the Kingdom of God is always increasing; it knows no boundaries.²³ How does this happen? How can the Kingdom of God increase? Only by our efforts to extend the boundaries of the Kingdom! God has entrusted us with this—we are to disciple nations, we are to pray for His Kingdom to come.

While legally Jesus is King of Kings, Lord of all, experientially not all of His enemies have been put under His feet. (We know that the last enemy, death, is still operative in the earth.) It was the same with the Children of Israel and the Promised Land. God gave them the land—they legally owned it! Yet, to possess it experientially, they had to walk on it. Walking on it was not easy because it was occupied by others that contested ownership! In practical terms, until they possessed the land by walking on it, there was no benefit to them. It was necessary to fight to get what God had already given! Why would it be any different for us? Fulfilling the promises of God in our life means spiritual battles have to be fought.

JOB ONE!

According to Jesus, our Kingdom is not of this world.²⁴ Because of this, we don't fight the people of this world. Instead, we wrestle (struggle) against the spiritual powers that invisibly control the world system.²⁵ Our primary job then is to battle the enemy in spiritual warfare. We are to pull down the strongholds of the enemy and possess the Land of Promises in the Name of Jesus.²⁶

A stronghold is any fortification of the enemy. Enemy strongholds can be anywhere—in our personal lives, in our corporate lives, in our business, in our culture, in our society, in our government, et al. These are spiritual territories possessed, or, at least heavily influenced, by the

23 Isa. 9:7

24 John 18:36

25 Eph. 6:12

26 2 Cor. 10:4

desires and goals of the enemy. As these are torn down, the Kingdom of God is extended and we reclaim territory for God. We have helped put another enemy under the feet of Jesus.

The Jericho Test

The Children of Israel faced Jericho immediately after entering the land. Jericho was a fully fortified city. It was formidable. In the natural there was no way possible for Joshua and his troops to capture Jericho. The known ways wouldn't work. They needed something different.

The Commander of the Lord's Army (either an angel or possibly a pre-incarnate Jesus since he received worship) appears to Joshua to inform him of a few things:²⁷

1. He is on the Lord's side, i.e., only the purposes of the King matters. There are no agendas of men involved.
2. He gives Joshua a strategy. He tells him what to do, how to do it, where to do it, and when to do it. (He doesn't tell him why—obedience is expected.)

In every area of our life where we try to possess the promises of God, we will face a Jericho that will appear to be unsurmountable. (It is without God!) The Lord expects us to seek a strategy from Him for the situation and He will lend power to it to accomplish God's purpose. If we can't believe God to take our Jericho, how will we ever possess the land?

By following the strategy of God, Joshua was able to capture a city that was un-capturable. In order to do the impossible we need to have the strategy of God and know how to implement it.

Prepared for Battle

Any army, anywhere, prepares its recruits for battle through an intensive training program. These "Boot Camps" prepare the recruit for military life: to obey orders, to be loyal to comrades, to respect the chain of command, to use their weapons effectively and maintain them. After boot camp there may be specialized training in the area in which the recruit will be functioning.

No one who enters the army can bypass the boot camp training. Before he can be promoted or go into battle he must complete Basic Training. Every General, Captain, Lieutenant, Sergeant, and Private all went through the same boot camp preparation. Because of this, there is a commonality of experience, comradeship, and purpose regardless of the person's rank.

When a people prepare themselves for spiritual battle, it is absolutely necessary that they bear the mark of the covenant of God. The example for us is the Children of Israel entering the promised land. Since circumcision was not performed in the desert, the children that grew up while the older generation died off did not have the covenant mark. The first order of business after

²⁷ Joshua 5:13-6:5

crossing Jordan was to circumcise every male.²⁸ Under the New Covenant we have to have our heart circumcised as a mark of God's covenant.²⁹ It is up to the leadership to make sure that those who are entering spiritual warfare have exhibited a circumcised heart.

Personal Preparation

Your personal relationship with God must be clear and clean before entering even the most elementary level of spiritual warfare such as casting out demons. This means that you must be born-again, filled with the Holy Spirit, and moving in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, i.e., have a history of experience with spiritual things. You can't operate in the spiritual realm on the experience of someone else.

There is a dramatic example of the importance of our own relationship with the Lord being correct before attempting to cast out a demon. The seven sons of Sceva had seen Paul casting out demons and thought that they could do that too. Their encounter with a demon possessed person left them naked and bleeding.³⁰ We have to have the *right* to use the Name of Jesus, otherwise, there is no spiritual authority.

The seven sons of Sceva thought that the Name of Jesus was like some magic incantation that could be used by anyone. They were Jewish mystics and classified what Paul was doing as something similar (but a lot easier) than what they had been doing with their magic arts. They had no knowledge of the power and authority of Jesus Christ.

Another example of personal preparation to cast out demons is the requirement for fasting and prayer. A man brought his demon oppressed son to Jesus for help. He told Jesus that he had first tried with His disciples but they couldn't help him. Jesus said that this kind only goes out by prayer and fasting.³¹

There are some ministry situations in which we will not be successful if we haven't prepared ourselves through prayer and fasting. During this process we humble ourselves before God, draw near to Him, cleanse our hands, and purify our hearts. The moment you decide to do spiritual warfare, these functions are no longer optional. Remember, spiritual war is real; casualties are real.

James tells us what we need to do to resist the devil so that he will flee from us.

James 4:6-8 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. (KJV)

It begins with submitting to God because God resists or opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. A prideful, arrogant, rebellious person is an easy mark for the enemy because God,

28 Joshua 5:5-8

29 Rom. 2:29

30 Acts 19:13-16

31 Matt. 17:19-21

Himself, is actively resisting that person! But, one who humbles himself before the Lord receives grace. While we all know that grace is the unmerited favor of God, that definition doesn't help us much in daily living. I have defined grace as "the empowering of God to do what we can't". I believe that is the essence of God's favor.

Based on that definition, if we are going to fight the devil we will certainly need grace! Apart from God's sovereignty, there is only one way that we can get more grace—by humbling ourselves before the Lord. We humble ourselves through prayer and fasting.

The next step is to draw near to God. When we do that He draws near to us. His nearness causes light to shine on our darkness. We recognize that we are sinners—that our hands are dirty. We also recognize that we are double-minded because of our impure hearts. His nearness motivates us to cleanse our hands and purify our hearts.

Cleansing our hands deals with our *actions*. Purifying our hearts deals with our *attitudes*. We need correct actions and correct attitudes. It takes both to walk before the world with confidence in our God and His authority.

If we have un-repentant sins (actions) or our hearts are full of qualities (attitudes) that are contrary to the Word of God, we give the enemy an inroad into our life. These create handles on us that he can grab anytime he wants and toss us this way or that way. When you begin to resist the devil, he will look for every handle in your life—anything that will take you out of the battle.

The devil will provide situations that will tempt the hidden things in your heart. James tells us in Chapter 1 verses 14 and 15 that we are enticed by temptation because of what is in our hearts. This lust of the heart conceives sin and gives birth to death. In other words, there is a progression that begins with enticement and ends with death. If there is nothing in our hearts that can be enticed by temptation then the enemy can't tempt us to sin. We MUST purify our hearts before we go into battle.

The process of purifying our hearts also affects our minds. These scriptures say that we are double-minded³², i.e., we go back and forth between God and the world. James tells us that the double-minded will receive nothing from God. If we are double-minded then how can we fight the devil if we receive nothing from God?

We MUST eliminate our double-mindedness if we are to be spiritually effective. We must focus our lives on fulfilling God's purpose and on seeking the Kingdom of God.

Corporate Preparation

Powerful, effective spiritual warfare is not done by oneself. There is an exponential increase in effectiveness as spiritual warriors come together in agreement and authority. The Scriptures tell us that one can put a thousand to flight, but two can put ten thousand to running³³ and tells us

³² James 1:8; James 4:8

³³ Deut. 32:30

again in another place that a three fold cord is not easily broken³⁴. This means that there is multiplied strength in numbers.

Not just numbers but people who are a part of each other. Jesus said wherever two or three are gathered in His Name, He is in the midst of them.³⁵ It doesn't take many, but it takes a single purpose. We need to be of "one mind, one spirit, one accord". We gather in His Name to accomplish His work. The moment we attempt to do this, the Scriptures that deal with problems between us and our brethren come into play.

To participate in spiritual warfare requires that all barriers, difficulties, walls, hurts, problems, bitterness, envy, backbiting, gossip, manipulation, and other works of the flesh be removed between us and our brethren. Our enemy is referred to in the Scriptures as the Prince of the Power of the Air—he rules over the air.³⁶ Its no wonder then that communications are scrambled or mis-interpreted by the participants (they all pass through the air). That is why we have to apply the principles of the Kingdom of God in order to overcome the communication breakdown created by the kingdom of darkness.

We have to "strive to keep the unity of the spirit".³⁷ Unity happens. It comes by the Spirit. However, maintaining unity requires work. That's our job.

Unity can only be produced by the Spirit—it is a spiritual reality. The enemy cannot produce unity—only its secular counterfeit, uniformity. In the natural it is easier for us to conform to uniformity than it is for us to live in spiritual unity.

Our God likes diversity (diversity of administration but the same Spirit)³⁸. He created a world full of diversity--animals, plants, people. He is glorified when two or three unique, diverse people come together in His Name in one accord and purpose to do the work of the King.

God has said that He commands blessing where the brethren dwell together in unity³⁹. I believe that if we do our part here, then God's blessing comes both spiritually and physically.

The enemy strives to keep us from unity. He doesn't want anyone to be blessed. If he can keep us divided and isolated, he can keep us from victory. Effective spiritual warfare requires that we come into unity and be blessed of God.

Spiritual Warfare Strategy

God never gives us a job without equipping us, training us, and giving us a plan on how to accomplish it. The same is true of spiritual warfare.

34 Ecc. 4:12

35 Matt. 18:20

36 Eph. 2:2

37 Eph. 4:3

38 1 Cor. 12:4-6

39 Psalm 133:1-3

God has a standard, natural procedure for us to bring forth the work that He has for us to do.

1. As we humble ourselves before Him in worship and fellowship, He stirs our spirits with His purpose.
2. His purpose, idea, burden, and insight form in us a “vision”, a proceeding word to do what the Lord desires.
3. Over a period of time, the Lord begins to purify our vision. It grows and matures and becomes clearer.
4. Eventually, a clear, clean proceeding word comes forth and we begin to do what the Lord has called us to do.

If we follow this process, all that we need in terms of training, understanding, resources, and equipping will be developed.

Directions for Fighting

Spiritual encounters of the military kind are not for the "carnal" Christian. Make sure that *you* are right with God first. You can't go to war with the Devil until you are at peace with God. It is very important that you have a good scriptural foundation in your life that it is not easily shaken.

Before undertaking spiritual warfare, seek God for a Gift of Discernment and prophetic understanding. This will be a big help in determining the types of spirits that you are dealing with. Any group of warfare intercessors will need prophetic insight in order to function effectively.

Remember that spiritual warfare is fought on progressive battlefields:

- Personal
- Family
- Local Assembly of believers (your local congregation)
- Church in the city (as God sees it)
- Regional aspects of the Kingdom
- National aspects of the Kingdom
- International aspects of the Kingdom

In your zeal don't try to bypass some battles in order to get to bigger and better things. We grow, mature, and fight in an orderly, progressive manner.

Mobilizing the Army

There is a difference between a mobilized army and an unmobilized one. Each can be trained, prepared, and in readiness; but, it is the mobilized army that engages the enemy. Those who are

called on "active" duty have some advantages. They don't have to worry about the supply line. While they are engaging the enemy the Commander-in-Chief of the army provides housing, clothes, and food. The army can focus on overcoming the enemy ("... seek first the Kingdom of God") without thought to the needs of this world.

Before an army is mobilized, intelligence has analyzed the enemy positions, weapons, tactics, strategies, modes of operation, and other pertinent information. In a spiritual context this involves understanding about "spiritual geography". We must be discerning about the effect the invisible has on the visible. The story of Elisha's servant is a good example. He could see the visible--the horses, chariots, and great host of the enemy coming against them, but could not see the invisible until Elisha prayed for his eyes to be opened. Then he saw the spiritual army that surrounded Elisha and saw the results of their work when Elisha prayed.

II Ki 6:15-18 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. (KJV)

Remember, it is spiritual reality (the heavenlies) that is the arena of battle. This is where our warfare occurs with the outcomes of the battles manifested in natural reality (us, our assembly, our cities.)

We need to ask God to open our eyes; to help us see the city the way that He does. We must discern the spiritual reality of our city. We need to see how the "spiritual geography" is laid out. Is there one "principality" or several "powers" dividing the area?

If we have trouble viewing the spiritual reality, we can project or deduce it from the groupings of similar societal symptoms that are manifested in particular geographical areas. Remember, the area takes on the characteristics of its ruler.

It is important that the people involved in spiritual warfare come against the strongholds that hinder working together. Strongholds are built by the Devil so that he can influence behavior without being detected. A stronghold is always built on a foundation of the flesh. As the stronghold develops, it empowers the flesh to the point that it can become uncontrollable. This is one of Satan's tactics to keep the body from unity—playing on the fleshly, carnal nature in us.

The three toughest strongholds that you will have to deal with as you try to come together are 1) disunity, 2) spiritual apathy, 3) spiritual ignorance. The enemy works through these both individually and corporately. Tearing down these strongholds sets you free to come into unity with the brethren and gives you the desire to fulfill the calling of God.

The strongholds mentioned above work on a corporate level. The type of stronghold changes depending on the arenas of conflict. For example, if you are beginning on the personal level the

three toughest strongholds are 1) unbelief, 2) fear, and 3) lust. The family area would also produce different strongholds that would have to be dealt with.

God has given us the pattern for spiritual war in Jeremiah:

Jer 1:10 See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.(KJV)

You can't build or plant until you first root out, pull down, and destroy. First root out (locate) the areas of enemy activity, then pull down the strongholds, destroy their deceptions, and throw down their influence. Afterwards, build and plant with the Word of God.

Determine which areas of enemy activity are in your personal, family or church's sphere of influence and concentrate on them. There will be spiritual boundaries that can be sensed in the spirit through prayer.

2 Cor 10:13-16 We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the field God has assigned to us, a field that reaches even to you. We are not going too far in our boasting, as would be the case if we had not come to you, for we did get as far as you with the gospel of Christ. Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our area of activity among you will greatly expand, so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. For we do not want to boast about work already done in another man's territory. (NIV)

This type of spiritual warfare is usually a corporate function. At the personal level you will have to deal with strongholds and the flesh but corporately you will have to come against territorial spirits. That means the battle is bigger than your group of believers. While it may start as a function of your assembly or group, it will grow to encompass a bigger area.

Go to battle with the authority of the Name of Jesus. The enemy has blinded the minds of people. The purpose of spiritual warfare is to give them sight and understanding, to set the captives free by tearing down enemy strongholds and opening the heavens (through prayer).

For further instruction on how to deal with the principalities and powers see the teaching "Prayers and Proclamations" available on our website: www.lifestreamteaching.com.

These principles will make a good guideline to follow as you move into spiritual warfare. But, remember, *these are principles only and MUST be applied to your situation by the Holy Spirit to be effective.*