

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

LESSON 1

The Army of God

Throughout the Bible Christians are referred to as soldiers in the army of God. When a person invites Jesus into their life, Jesus should become the Lord of their existence. Jesus, as the true Lord, becomes the enlisting and commanding officer of the Christian's life.

- **Endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. Soldiers don't get tied up in the affairs of civilian life, for then they cannot please the officer who enlisted them.**

2 Timothy 2:3-4 NLT

Endure – to hold out against, sustain without impairment or yielding, to bear without resistance or with patience.

Enduring suffering requires the motivation to push through hard times that try faith, patience, and the mind. Being a soldier of any army does not prove to be easy. Just as in life some seasons have hardships as well as seasons of fulfilling duties with fewer hindrances.

Soldiers that allow themselves to be tied up in the affairs of civilian life lose the alertness and readiness for combat. As Christians begin to focus more on natural life their spiritual readiness begins to wear or weaken. In combat, a distracted soldier is not an effective soldier. A distracted soldier can lose his/her life as well as cost others their life in some situations. Christians must maintain focus and alertness to apply the Word of God to every area of life.

Not all events in life are spiritual battles. Some events happen due to nature (storms, sickness, old age, etc.), while similar events can be spiritual attacks (spirit of infirmity, the devourer, etc.). Soldiers should assess every situation and judge what action should be taken as an appropriate measure. Christians must have the ability to judge everything by the Word of God to better their life or battle the enemy on all fronts.

- **But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.**
1 Corinthians 2:15 KJV
- **For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;**

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 KJV

As Christians fight spiritual battles it is not people that are the real enemy, but strongholds, imaginations, high things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, etc., that are the driving force for the actions of others in spiritual conflict. Soldiers of God should understand that God is the Commander-in-Chief, Jesus is the commanding officer, the Holy Spirit is the non-commissioned officer, and the Word of God is the battle guide.

God as Commander-in-Chief

God is the ultimate authority to the army (**Acts 5:29; Romans 13:1; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 11:3; 2 Peter 1:3**). After all, it is called *God's* army. He gives the top commands that placed Jesus on the front lines for our eternal salvation (**Matthew 28:18**), the Holy Spirit as the guide and commanding force that works with each soldier daily, and He wrote the Bible through His followers to be the battle guide.

Jesus as Commanding Officer

Jesus was commissioned as the officer to lead the battle for our salvation. His tactics recorded in the battle guide displays how soldiers should pattern their style of fighting various enemies (**Matthew 12:22-24; 12:28-29; 17:15-21; Mark 3:11; 5:2-13; 9:25-29; Luke 4:33-36**). Even as Jesus fought battles, He conferred to the Commander-in-Chief for further instructions or confirmation to follow through with the current battle plans (**Matthew 24:36; 26:39; Mark 13:32; Luke 6:12; John 5:30; 8:42; 17:5**).

Holy Spirit as Non-Commissioned Officer

The Holy Spirit is the commanding force that is always present in the daily tasks of the soldiers (**John 14:16-17,26; 15:26; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:9, 26; 1 Corinthians 2:13**). As a guide and connection to the upper ranks, the Holy Spirit gives God's soldiers the discernment and moral compass that correlates with the battle guide.

The Bible as the Battle Guide

The Bible has the necessary equipment to be prepared for battle in every arena. This battle guide expresses the tried and proven methods of battle as well as the mistakes made by those who have lost battles during the history of God's people. Knowing the battle guide will have an impact on seeing the attacks of the enemy (**Psalms 119:11; Proverbs 30:5-6; Matthew 4:4; Luke 11:28; Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 2:15, 3:16**). This resource was created with God's people in mind to have a personal understanding of God's thoughts, God's plans, the history of God's people, and to have a personal relationship with God.

A soldier of Jesus Christ repeatedly does what is right with a right heart toward God to be under God's rule and in His kingdom. As God's army marches through time it is imperative that the foundational disciplines and doctrines be maintained to keep active, fit, and battle-ready soldiers. God's army is not an army of one, but an army of many jointly fit together fighting as a body of one under the commission of Jesus Christ.

- **Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.**

Romans 12:4-5 NLT

- **He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.**

Ephesians 4:16 NLT

Christians must understand the importance of every soldier and what the role of each soldier is in the army of God. Understanding each part of the rank, file, and role of the military personnel will make a stronger fighting force. Knowledge can be just as strong of a weapon as the battle equipment given as armor.

May we as Christians seek to gain every resource available to be better soldiers in the army of God.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE LESSON 2 Knowing the Enemy

Christians have enemies. To think God's people should not have enemies is both inaccurate doctrine and a desire for false peace.

- **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**

Ephesians 6:12 KJV

Knowing that our enemies are not people, but the spiritual realms that may have possession or influence on the people around us will assist in fighting an accurate battle. Christians fight principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places.

Principalities (over people) – the principalities are the lowest rank of demons among Satan's officers. These demons are over people in various forms to divert or distract people from serving or living for God (**2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:2**). Although these petty officers within Satan's army may have the lowest rank, many Christians will not overcome this first level of attacks and progress to bigger enemies.

Powers (over cities, regions, and nations) – this second level of officers in Satan's army has delegated authority to a specific jurisdiction. This level of the enemy has an area or sphere of jurisdiction to exercise given authority given by the Prince of this world, Satan (**Revelation 2:12-13**). These jurisdictions can be viewed as cities, regions, and nations. Each jurisdiction can have its own set of demonic power. The Bible declares unseen, evil powers had control over Babylon and were judged by God (**Isaiah 13:19-22**). Overcoming this level of the enemy must be accomplished by stronger Christians seeking to gain the advantage for the jurisdiction's sake.

Rulers of the darkness of this world (over the wickedness of the world/darkness) – this level of demonic activity or officers involves moral darkness, wickedness under the influence of Satan, gloom, a dark cloud in a time or age (**John 12:31, 14:30, and 16:11**). These lieutenants of the darkness gain momentum as time passes and the darkness of the region and world grows (**Isaiah 60:1**). As Satan is described as the prince of this world, he can give authority to his angels to rule the darkness of this world. Regions have a common darkness that must be overcome by the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (**Colossians 1:13**).

Spiritual wickedness in high places (in the heavenlies) – this level of the enemy is the highest-ranking among Satan's army. This phrase is defined as supernatural, religious, depravity (morally bad/evil), wicked counsel, lawlessness, opposes God and His goodness within a whole nation. Satan is described by Paul (**2 Corinthians 4:4**) as the god of this

world which reflects his rule in the high places that can be given to the generals of his army. These generals of the wicked spirits in the heavenlies have authority above the world (**Revelation 18:2**) given by Satan to combat at the highest levels given to his domain.

- **How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning [light-bringer], son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the ground, You who have weakened the nations [king of Babylon]! But you said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the remote parts of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.**

Isaiah 14:12-14 AMP

Satan desires to rule over God's kingdom and people. Although he will never fully succeed with this plot, he has been given power and authority to certain levels of the heavens above the earth as the fallen world.

Levels of Demonic Power and Authority

There is a difference in the effectiveness or evil of each demon.

- **Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.**

Matthew 12:45 KJV

This verse displays the rank and difference each demon has from one another. Some of the demons are more wicked than other demons. Christians need to know their enemy and the strengths of each level of the enemy to truly understand the level of battle required to have victory. God brings victory to every Christian that does not give up. With that said, if a Christian thinks a demon from the rulers of the darkness of this world can be overcome by a simple half-hearted stance, that Christian is sorely mistaken.

Even in the beginning of time, God established a judgment to keep evil powers from gaining momentum and ruling nations by not allowing a witch to live (**Exodus 22:18**). Allowing certain things to grow will eventually lead to the inability to control the once small evil that is now the ruling force over the nation. Knowledge and wisdom of spiritual warfare can help win battles. If God did not think this understanding was necessary, He would not have given the thought to Paul to record in **Ephesians 6:12** the accurate level of enemy soldiers.

May Christians within the army of God understand their enemy better to overcome the personal battles in life to become more effective warriors for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE LESSON 3 Warfare of Disciples

Spiritual warfare is not a new concept for Christians. This type of warfare was acknowledged by Jesus as He gave the disciples power and authority as they were asked to leave their ordinary lives. The warfare of the disciples began just as Jesus called each of the twelve to the office of a disciple.

- **And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.**

Matthew 10:1 KJV

Jesus called unto him (summoned, invited, or called to an office or duty of disciple) the twelve and gave them power against unclean spirits and sickness/disease. This power in the Greek is translated as authority (the right to control or govern, dominion, the area or sphere of jurisdiction, rule, to have power over). The authority given from Jesus is over unclean spirits and healing all manner of sickness and disease. These disciples were pupils, learners, or followers of Jesus Christ. Healing (to tend, to save, take care of the sick, cure) all manner of sickness and all manner of disease (weakness, ailment, infirmity, malady) was a great authority given to the disciples of Jesus Christ. This ability of the New Testament church originated during this time but continues to present time disciples of Jesus with even greater power from the Holy Spirit.

Jesus As the Example

Jesus set the example as the disciple-maker and gave the guidelines for the disciples' code of conduct.

- **These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.**

Matthew 10:5-15 KJV

Jesus gave the instructions for the disciples to stay within their area and not go into the areas of the Gentiles or Samaria but to focus on the house of Israel. The Gentiles reference the heathen/pagan people. Even Jesus limited the exposure of the young disciples to those that were non-believers. This foundation set the stage for the disciples to gather experience and be a witness to those that were among God's people but did not have the full knowledge of God's Son, Jesus.

The next phase of authority would give the disciples the direct connection and maturity with God to go unto all the world. Jesus gives the disciples further instructions after his resurrection and within the early church foundation, He permits every disciple to be a witness unto all the world by the power of the Holy Spirit (**Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8**).

Wise as serpents/harmless as doves

Jesus prepares the disciples that the mission He is sending them on is not an easy task. To accomplish the desired outcome, they must be wise as serpents and harmless or innocent as doves.

- **Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.**

Matthew 10:16-23 KJV

To be wise is to be of cautious character, have practical skills, sensible. Serpents have a cunningness about them that allows them to do as they desire through practical skills, but have the caution needed to not be harmed in many circumstances. Harmless is unmixed, innocent, simple, without guile, blameless, without deceit, honorable. Doves do not seek to deceive others or attack others for selfish reasons. They instead are a symbol of peace (**Genesis 8:11**) and the Spirit of God (**Matthew 3:16-17, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:21-22, John 1:32**).

May we as Christians use Jesus as our example, like the disciples, and take on the spiritual battles to advance the kingdom of God in our lives and in the present time.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE LESSON 4 The Armor of God (Part 1)

The armor of God is widely taught or preached, but what is the armor of God and how is it used? Having accurate knowledge of this armor will not only protect you in battle but also assist in using the God-given equipment with precision to attack the enemy.

- **Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.**

Ephesians 6:13-18 KJV

The armor of God covers all areas of the body to be ready for and ready to battle. Let's look at each piece of the armor to see its effects on how Christians should battle the enemy of God.

Body Armor

The first grouping of the armor of God describes the defensive equipment that every soldier should have to protect themselves against the attacks of the enemy. Having the proper body armor will keep the soldier alive and fighting each day without falling victim to an assault against the soldier's person, possessions, family, or ministry. This armor defends the soldier with protection issued by God but is always the soldier's responsibility to wear.

Loins girt about with truth

This belt of truth was used to uphold the looseness of the garments of the soldier. A soldier ready for battle would tuck his tunic into his belt to be prepared to run, battle, and not be tossed around by his outer garments. Having loins girted is a mark of preparedness and an ability to take off at a moment's notice. Without loins girted hindrances or dangers could cause the soldier to fall prey in battle to the enemy.

The falsehoods of God's enemies can only be combated with the truth. Jesus describes Himself as the Truth and defeated the enemy to bring eternal life for those who believe in Him (**John 14:6**). The emphasis of Jesus as truth gives Christians the example of how life should be lived while fighting the enemy and overcoming the world through the power of God. The Word of God is the truth Christian soldiers should have girted about them (**John 17:17**). This truth supplies the foundation of character that combats many schemes of the enemy through deception (presents clarity in all business situations), rumors (which gives no room for slander or gossip), or false character (which keeps a transparent character).

Another aspect of truth is to not give in to hypocrisy or shams. In the military, there was a saying of certain soldiers being shamtastic. This meant they could weasel their way out of any task, duty, or responsibility. The truth was not in these soldiers and they did not earn the promotion to the next level until the shams were overcome by being found faithful. Christians that are shamtastic do not have the truth in them. This is a dangerous area to live with a serious enemy looking for victory over any of God's soldiers.

Breastplate of righteousness

The breastplate of righteousness protects the most vital parts of life. During biblical times this armor was made of leather or heavy linen that was outfitted with animal horns, animal hide, or metal. Just as the breastplate protects the whole torso, the heart, lungs, intestines, and other vital organs are vulnerable unless covered by this armor. The Jewish thinking, according to John MacArthur, holds that the heart is the mind and will while the bowels represent emotions and feelings. These areas are the highest areas of attack by the enemy due to being the easiest target on a person.

The righteousness that is to be put on by the Christian does not reflect the righteousness given through Jesus Christ's obedience to the plan of salvation. This righteousness, also known as holiness, is put on through living holy each day in obedience to God's Word (the battle plan), God (the Commander-in-Chief), and the Holy Spirit (the NCO).

Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace

A soldier with feet shod with preparation displays the readiness to walk, run, or trample over any surface required for battle. Shod means to cover, to put on, or to bind on. Preparation gives the picture of being ready for every good deed. Having feet bound in readiness to do what is required for battle.

The Gospel of Peace is the news of the obedience of Jesus to bring salvation to those that choose to believe in Him. Gospel of peace has the capability to turn a person from an enemy of God into God being that person's defender. When a soldier of God has peace with the almighty Creator a feeling of fight arises to claim victories for the Commander-in-Chief.

The helmet of salvation

The helmet of salvation covers the head from the deathly blows the enemy tries to strike. This helmet is designed to cover the whole head and even cheeks to save injuries the soldier could sustain during battle. Any injury to the head causes a physical imbalance, loss of cognition, and requires moments of suspension from war to regain the ability to fight (if the soldier can recover).

Satan uses two powerful tools to attack the mind of Christians: discouragement and doubt. These resources used can cover a gambit of events within the Christian's life in an effort to divide the believer from God. Being secured in salvation creates trust in God. As salvation is made of three parts each element defends the Christian's mind and walks with God against the enemy's attacks. Justification blots out a believer's past just as if it never happened. God forgets past sin as forgiveness is given. Sanctification is the present

lifestyle of the Christian that seeks holiness and right living from the standard established within the Bible. The third part of salvation is glorification that represents the promise of a glorified body/future with God the Commander-in-Chief if the soldier does not abandon the missions or God's army. Victory is guaranteed when desertion is not an option.

The helmet of salvation also defends believers from being enticed to be molded by the world (**Romans 12:2**). Having salvation on the forethought of the mind also produces an admiration for God that desires to serve and is not easily swayed to follow another's command.

May we as Christians put on this body armor to be ready for the spiritual battles of our lives.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE LESSON 5 The Armor of God (Part 2)

Weapons

Soldiers that are in battle never rest as those that are in the comfort of home. Being ready for battle requires the soldier to know every part of the weapons assigned as well as having the ability to know how to be quick in response to any attack that may take place. The response time in battle could mean life or death.

The shield of faith

The shield of faith is designed to protect the whole body in height and width against all weapons that an enemy would use to strike. Being sometimes soaked or dipped in water extinguished the enemy's flaming missiles thrown at the soldier holding the shield. This important armor piece could deflect many of the enemy's first attempts at attacking the soldier.

For the Christian soldier, this shield disables the enemy's attacks on a believer's faith in God's goodness, love, power, grace, mercy, sufficiency, and truthfulness. Having faith in God extinguishes the fiery darts that are designed to make the target lose belief or trust in God. John MacArthur says, "Faith is only as reliable and helpful as the trustworthiness of its object". In the case of a Christian, it is placed within an unfailing God.

The sword of the Spirit

The sword of the Spirit should be close by and ready for use at any given moment. The Holy Spirit is the origin of the sword that inspired the penmen to write the words God authored from Heaven.

- **All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**

2 Timothy 3:16-17 KJV

This weapon is also a source of truth (**John 17:17**), source of happiness (**Proverbs 8:34**), a source of power (**Luke 10:19**), a source of spiritual growth (**Acts 17:11, Romans 10:17**), a source of guidance (**Psalms 119:105**), a source of comfort (**Job 23:12**), a source of protection (**Hebrews 4:12**), and a source of victory (**Luke 1:37**).

Communication

- **Pray at all times (on every occasion, in every season) in the Spirit, with all [manner of] prayer and entreaty. To that end keep alert and watch with strong purpose and perseverance, interceding in behalf of all the saints (God's consecrated people).**

Ephesians 6:18 AMP

Praying always

Prayer is the only communication a Christian has with the superior officers of Heaven. Without proper communication or having a lack of communication battles are lost, and soldiers die on the battlefield. In military training one of the first established tactics to overcome an enemy is to take out the communication between the soldiers, but especially the communication between the soldiers and the leaders.

The Apostle Paul follows the armor of God with this verse about prayer as an important part of the Christian strategy. *Praying* means requests always directed toward God, to ask from inferior to superior, to make requests for particular needs. *Always* reflects uncertain affinity, marked out and expressed. Constant communication with God for plans and direction is the purpose of prayer. Praying refreshes, strengthens, and encourages. To pray at all times reflects living in a continual God-consciousness. Christians should pray for all believers and not just themselves.

The failure to pray is a failure to glorify God and have true, intimate fellowship with Him. A person's knowledge and relationship to God are measured by his prayer life. The more a person prays the more they know God and build a relationship with Him. God desires His soldiers to remind Him of the promises in His Word. Knowing His Word allows Christians to know Him more. Using the Word of God during prayer paints the picture of a soldier communicating with his commander while swinging his sword at the enemy during battle.

To receive the proper supplies for battle a soldier must be specific in the requests made to his superiors. When you do not pray specifically God cannot answer specifically. Although God is an all-knowing Being, He desires His soldiers to use the mouth He created to speak and make requests or declare things in prayer.

Not only do we make requests, pray specifically, but watch unto perseverance.

Perseverance is to be persistent, to be strong or firm, to endure, to accomplish, to remain, to bring through to an end. When Christians persevere, there is victory.

May Christians use every piece of armor God has given to receive victory over the enemy.