

In this series, we are going to deal with the subject of spiritual warfare and bring correct, biblical teaching to this often-misunderstood subject.

As a point of reference, we will be referring to content from the following books:

Dressed to Kill by Pastor Rick Renner

The Triumphant Church by Rev. Kenneth E. Hagin

It seems with almost any Bible subject, people can have the tendency to take it to the extreme and get off base and away from the Bible. Unfortunately, this often does great harm to the individual as well as the Body of Christ.

The Scripture instructs us to deal with the unseen, invisible forces that have been marshaled against us.

Mark 16:17 NKJV And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;

Ephesians 6:12 NKJV For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Setting people free from Satan's power is a primary concern of Jesus Christ, and it should be a concern of ours as well.

1 John 3:8 NKJV ... For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

Acts 10:38 NKJV how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

Spiritual Warfare actual has much more to it than just dealing with the devil.

There are actually three different aspects to spiritual warfare:

- ✓ **Taking control of our minds**
- ✓ **Crucifying the flesh**
- ✓ **Dealing with the enemy**

The truth is, the devil's attacks against our lives would not work if our flesh did not cooperate.

Colossians 3:5 NKJV Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Romans 6:1-2 NKJV What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? (2) Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

Romans 6:7 NKJV For he who has died has been freed from sin.

Living the crucified life is a critical part of spiritual warfare.

Rick Renner says:

“A person can scream at the devil all day long, but if that person has willfully permitted some area of his mind to go unchecked and unguarded - if he is aware of sin but has not been willing to deal with it – he has opened the door for an attack on himself.

In that case, all his prayers against the devil will be to no avail because his real enemy is not the devil. Rather it is his own carnal mind and flesh which must be submitted to the control of the Holy Spirit in order to eradicate these attacks.

“If people only focus on the devil as they pursue the subject of spiritual warfare and fail to consider other equally as important

areas, their emphasis on spiritual warfare can and will be very damaging to them.”

We must always remember that the real battle with Satan was won at the Cross and the resurrection by Jesus Christ.

This same victorious Christ who single handedly defeated the devil lives in us in the person of the Holy Spirit!

1 John 4:4 NKJV You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

Colossians 2:11-12, 15 NKJV (11) In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, (12) buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. (15) Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Greek translation: He completely stripped principalities and powers and left them utterly naked with nothing left at their disposal to retaliate. Jesus boldly, confidently, and loudly exposed and displayed this now defunct foe to Heaven's hosts.

We must approach spiritual warfare from a place of already obtained victory (by Jesus) instead of trying to get the victory.

As we approach the subject of spiritual warfare, we must guard against superstitious, homemade remedies about it.

We must base our understanding on the sound teachings of the Bible.

Example – teachings that the best ways to deal with demonic forces in the heavenlies or the prince of the power of the air, we

must climb to the highest floors of skyscrapers or rent an airplane so we can get where they are.

If this is necessary and how it is done, then Jesus never got the victory over the devil or used any authority because none of those things existed in His day.

Yet somehow, Jesus was able to fully carry out His earthly ministry and fulfill God's will.

Ignorance of God's Word always leaves the Christian and the Body of Christ vulnerable.

Hosea 4:6a NKJV My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...

Sometimes we emphasize spiritual warfare and think that spiritual warfare is especially necessary now because things are so much darker now than they ever have been.

The challenges that we face spiritually today are really no different than or greater than those of preceding generations of believers.

If you study the pagan culture of the Greeks and Romans of the early Church day, they were by far more worse than the historians could tell us.

(Read from Dressed to Kill – pages marked)

It is clear, Satan was out to destroy the early Church as much as he is out to destroy the modern-day Church.

Rather than be destroyed, the Early Church arose in the power of the Spirit to meet the challenge – just as we will arise in our own day to meet any challenge the enemy would bring before us!

The same armor of God that Paul wrote about in Ephesians 6 worked for the early Church just as it will work for us.

Satan tried to destroy the Church at its inception – and it is certain that he will try to attack and victimize the Church as we approach the coming of the Lord.

But just as the early church arose in the power of the Spirit to meet the challenge, so will we!

1 John 5:4 NKJV For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.

The reality is the harder the devil hit the early Church the more it thrived, grew and multiplied. The same will happen today!

No evil force has ever prevailed over the power of God or the people of God, and never will!

The words “war” and “warfare” are only used 5 times in all of the New Testament. Not once were they used in the Gospels during Jesus ministry.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NKJV (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 carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, (5) casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

In these verses, the devil is not mentioned one time.

1 Timothy 1:18 NKJV This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,

In this verse, Paul is telling Timothy to remain loyal the call of God and fight the fight of faith. The devil is not mentioned here either.

2 Timothy 2:4 NKJV No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

Paul is telling Timothy to keep his life free of clutter and stay single minded as a soldier would.

James 4:1 NKJV Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?

Battling the flesh can be a war.

In light of this, it is abundantly clear that the New Testament usage of the words “war” and “warfare” primarily has to do with conquering the flesh and taking charge of our minds.

Yes, the devil may attack the mind, and he may attempt to energize the flesh to work against us. However, if we will keep our minds and our flesh under the control of the Holy Spirit, most of the spiritual warfare we encounter in life will have already been settled.

How Real Warfare Begins

Most believers who have fallen in recent times would not have fallen if they had not given the devil some kind of foothold in their mind.

- ✓ **Demon spirits have absolutely no power to bring about destruction unless they can find an open door into a person’s mind.**

The Holy Spirit is faithful to convict us of any areas in our lives that leave us vulnerable for attack.

He will urge us to repent and change before the devils builds

strongholds in our thinking. However, it is still up to us to see that these opened doors are slammed shut and forever closed.

- ✓ **Demon spirits cannot destroy without an open door into a person's soul – and such an entrance can only be given by way of permission.**

The one thing that the Lord will not let the enemy do is override someone's will.

- ✓ **Regardless of how many demon spirits have been assigned to destroy a believer, that person must cooperate with the enemy's suggestions before temptation can overtake him and ruin his witness.**

Ultimately you and I are responsible for our own failure or success in obeying God in this life. We cannot shift the blame for our failure to demonic attack.

- You can scream that the devil is after your money until you are blue in the face. But if you have failed to balance your checkbook or were irresponsible in paying your bills, you opened the door to that financial attack.
- You can declare that the enemy is attempting to afflict you with sickness. But if you abuse your body by not eating right or not getting rest, or exercising, you have opened the door for your body to be attacked.
- You can say that your marriage is under attack from the devil but if you speak harshly to your spouse, never spend any time with them, or have not made your marriage a priority in your life, you have thrown the door wide open for the enemy to attack and destroy your marriage.

Sometimes there are genuine attacks on our lives from the enemy that catch us off guard when we are doing everything that we know to do in obedience to the Lord.

We see that this happened in Jesus ministry:

Mark 4:35-41 NKJV On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side." (36) Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. (37) And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. (38) But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" (39) Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. (40) But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" (41) And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

In verse 37, the phrase, "And a great windstorm arose..." comes from the Greek word "ginomai" which means "something that happens unexpectedly or something that catches one off guard."

Jesus was on His way to Gadara where the Gadarene demoniac lived. The enemy wanted to stop Jesus from being able to deliver one of his prized possessions and thus perform a great miracle.

- ✓ **This attack of the enemy came right before one of Jesus' greatest triumphs in ministry.**

Whatever the devil does, Jesus wants to match that attack with an even greater blessing and victory in your life!

- ✓ **Most battles are fought and won because we are faithful to heed the Holy Spirit's warnings to deal with some area of our lives before it got out of control.**
- ✓ **Spiritual warfare is not a momentary gust of emotion to**

temporarily frighten away the devil. Quite the opposite!

Real spiritual warfare is a specific condition of the mind that involves a lifelong commitment.

It is not so much an action as it is a determined and committed attitude of the mind.

In spite of all of the attacks that Apostle Paul withstood, he never failed morally or compromised in his ministry. Paul's personal consecration to the Lord was his greatest defense against the enemy. Nothing in him cooperated with the devil's devices and temptations. Paul's personal holiness paralyzed the devil's ability to make Paul fall morally.

- ✓ **The thought of an instant cure is very alluring to the uncommitted and spiritually immature who are looking for a "quick fix" to change their deeply rooted, habitual, and often self-imposed problems.**

This is the reason many have gotten off course where spiritual warfare is concerned.

There is no such thing as the instant cure. It is a process!