

Spiritual Warfare

What is "spiritual warfare? We can define it two ways for Christians: The internal war of that remnant of our carnal selves that remains under construction as we work out our salvation (with fear and trembling). And the demonic attacks of spirit enemies.

Old Testament Examples

- It began in the Garden. Satan going after Eve thru the serpent.

"Now the serpent was more cunning than any animal of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God really said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" Genesis 3:1

- The angelic battle over the body of Moses.

"But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him an abusive judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"" Jude 9 (see Deuteronomy 34:5-6)

- Demons over Persia battle the angel sent to prophesy to Daniel.

"The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes (archangel), came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia," Daniel 10:13

New Testament Examples

- The beginning of spiritual warfare as we know it from Jesus.

"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." Matthew 4:1

His was intentional. He had to defeat sin (and did) in order to be the perfect sacrifice for our sins because He overcame Satan on earth – the temptations – and defeated death.

- The demons knew Jesus by name and Who He is

“...all who were ill with various diseases were brought to Jesus, and laying His hands on each one, He healed them. Demons also came out of many people, shouting, “You are the Son of God!” But He rebuked the demons and would not allow them to speak, because they knew He was the Christ. Luke 4:40-41

- Jesus remembers seeing Satan cast out of Heaven.

“And (Jesus) said to them, “I watched Satan fall from heaven like lightning.” Luke 10:18 [One-third of the angels who also rebelled were also cast down. Revelation 12:4]

- Jesus on spiritual warfare brought on by Satan the devil.

“You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” John 8: 44

- Satan’s purpose on earth.

“The thief (Satan) comes only to steal and kill and destroy;” John 10:10

- Just as he was with Job and Peter, Satan seeks permission to attack Christians today.

“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; Luke 22:31

- The Apostle Peter had warnings that mirrored those of Jesus.

“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” 1 Peter 5:8

How do we prepare for and fight our spiritual battles?

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not wage battle according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying arguments and all arrogance raised against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,”
2 Corinthians 10: 3-5

The Apostle Paul also wrote these words to help us understand our weapons:

- Prayer: *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by **prayer and pleading with thanksgiving** let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will **guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*** Philippians 4:6-7

- The Word of God:

*“...above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one...and the **sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always** with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,”*
Ephesians 6: 10-18a.

- *“For the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, even penetrating as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”* Hebrews 4:12

Jesus told the disciples several times the Holy Spirit was coming to empower them to fight these battles that demonic foes would wage against them.

- The Holy Spirit:

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and remind you of all that I said to you.” John 14:26

“but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and as far as the remotest part of the earth.” Acts 1:8

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”
Ephesians 6:10-12

Guarding Our Hearts

- Hard hearts

“Later He appeared to the eleven disciples themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reprimanded them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen from the dead. Mark 16:14

- Adulterous hearts

“Then those of you who escape will remember Me among the nations where they are carried captive, because (God) I was crushed by their adulterous heart which has departed from Me, and by their eyes which play the harlot after their idols;

they will loathe themselves for the evils which they committed in all their abominations. Ezekiel 6:9

- Proud hearts

Haughty eyes and a proud heart, The lamp of the wicked, is sin. Proverbs 21:4; (Jesus speaking) "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled..." Luke 14:11

Guarding Our Minds

- Evil that is demonic in nature – much of what you see and hear from this world.

*"Take care, brothers and sisters, that there will not be in any one of you **an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.**" Hebrews 3: 12*

- Selfish thoughts that put anything ahead of God (idolatry) or a sense of entitlement

*For where you have envy and **selfish ambition**, there you find disorder and every evil practice. James 3:16*

- Foolish thoughts from the world that defy or contradict the Word of God.

*"For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but **they became futile in their reasonings**, and their senseless hearts were darkened." Romans 1:2*

Spiritual warfare is part of life this side of Heaven. You now understand it better and know we have "spiritual weapons" to engage in those battles. USE THEM!

The Invitation

SLAVE TO SIN: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in

Christ Jesus, Romans 3: 23-24

Jesus is the only way to God and freedom.

"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me."" John 14:6

RECEIVE YOUR FREEDOM IN CHRIST TODAY!

"Therefore there is now no condemnation at all for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death." Romans 8:1-2

For Christ's sake,

Walter