

Spiritual Warfare Lesson #1:

Introduction:

Spiritual warfare needs to be understood in the context of God's purpose. He has a specific will for each of us, but basically His purpose and desire is to be glorified in our life.

The difference between deliverance and spiritual warfare is that deliverance is dealing with

1. Demonic bondages,
2. And getting a person set free,

Deliverance involves the breaking up of legal grounds, the tearing down of strongholds (offensive spiritual warfare), and the casting out of demons.

Spiritual warfare is

1. Resisting,
2. Overcoming and
3. Defeating the enemy's lies
 - a. (In the form of deception,
 - b. Temptations and
 - c. Accusations) that he sends our way.

Spiritual warfare deals with three key things the enemy sends at us:

- temptations, deception and accusations.

We are going to attempt to understand the

1. Reality of spiritual warfare,
2. Nature and character of our enemy,
3. Some of his primary strategies that readily defeat us,
4. And, finally, how we can walk in victory on a daily basis.

As we study the truths of God's Word, Satan's lies will be exposed, and we will understand why faith, (believing what God says), is the victory.

- Spiritual warfare is not so much about demon possession, territorial spirits, or generational bondage as it is overcoming Satan's lies and deceits in our own life.

Offensive vs. Defensive warfare

Spiritual warfare comes in two ways: offensive and defensive.

1. *Offensive warfare* is tearing down the strongholds the enemy has formed in your mind through deception and accusations, and
2. *Defensive warfare* is guarding yourself against the tactics or schemes of the devil.

The enemy's three primary weapons

There are three things that we can expect from the devil.

- The Bible tells us that we struggle not against flesh and blood, but against demonic forces.
 - **Ephesians 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.*"

The three primary things we struggle against include:

#1 Deception:

To deceive somebody means to make another person believe a lie or something that is not true.

- When the enemy sends deception your way, it is an attempt to deceive you into believing something that is not true, so you will fall into error.
- Strongholds are built through deception.
 - A stronghold is formed when deception takes hold in a person's mind.
 - A stronghold is an incorrect thinking pattern that stems from believing something that is not true.

From the very beginning, Satan deceived Eve into believing that God's Word was not true. In Genesis 3:4, the devil told her that she will not surely die as God said she would in Genesis 2:17.

#2 Temptation:

Temptation often follows deception.

- First the enemy tells us, "You won't surely die!", then he makes the fruit on the forbidden tree look good to us.

- Since Eve accepted Satan's deception (his lie), now the tree that she was not supposed to touch looked good to her.
- She was tempted (enticed) to sin, because she allowed herself to first be deceived.
- Temptation is when we are enticed or encouraged to sin in one way or another.
 - **James 1:13-15 (NKJV)** ¹³ *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.*

In Matthew 4, Jesus was led out in the desert to be tempted by the devil. The devil tried to convince Jesus that it would be harmless to jump off a building.

- Jesus saw through Satan's deception, and resisted the temptation by speaking God's Word.
 - King David said in **Psalms 119:11**, *"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."*

When the enemy tempts you, he's showing you the worm... but behind that worm is a hook. The Word of God helps you see the hook behind the worm.

#3 Accusations:

The devil is known as the accuser of the brethren (Rev 12:10).

- He is known to take a believer who has done an embarrassing or gross sin in their past, and continue to rub it in their faces and beat them down with guilt and condemnation over their past.
 - **Romans 8:1 (NKJV)** *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

Spiritual warfare needs to be understood in the context of God's purpose.

- God has a specific will for each of us, but basically His purpose and desire is to be glorified (*hyped*) in our life.
- The Bible uses various terms to reinforce this.

- **In Romans 8: 29** God's purpose is that we be conformed to the image of Christ. "For those He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son."

Why does God predestine us to be conformed to the image of Christ?

- It is in order to glorify Him.
- Satan tempts us to sin in order to keep God from being glorified.
- We have an enemy that is intent on robbing God of His glory in our lives.
- God is glorified when we are conformed to the image of Christ and live like Him.

It is not simply for our benefit. He saves us, redeems us, and restores us to a relationship with Himself, gives us a new life in Christ, and fills us with His Spirit not exclusively for our blessing but for His glory.

Instead of having power to be His witness, do you find yourself intimidated, hesitant, and shy about sharing your faith?

Instead of holiness and godliness that comes from His presence within us, we struggle with temptation, lustful thoughts, and self-gratification as if we have not been crucified with Christ.

Question:

1. Why is it that Satan is able to get a foothold in our thoughts and feed discouragement and defeatist attitudes?
2. Why is it so easy for him to get us to focus on our own comforts and needs, nurture a sense of entitlement and turn us away from obedience?

Answer:

It is because of our self-centered nature and what we want and feel we deserve. In the process God is robbed of the glory He desires in our life and ministry.

- We need to recognize the reality of spiritual warfare and
- That we have an enemy robbing us of a victorious life in order to deprive God of His glory in our lives.

It is not about us, it is about God's desires.

- We just happen to be in the middle of feud that existed long before we showed up.
- But we have to choose a side whether we want to or not.

Deuteronomy 30:15–16 (NKJV)¹⁵ *“See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, ¹⁶ in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.*

James 4:7 (NKJV) ⁷ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

- You would think the Scripture says, “Ignore the devil and he will flee from you.”
- That's what we do most of the time. We just ignore him. We don't pay any attention to him.
- To ignore the devil and fail to heed what the Bible tells us about the reality of our adversary is to become vulnerable to his deceit and lies and give him free access to our heart.

Resist, fight, attack, counterattack, oppose, defy, challenge

He lies; he deceives; he works through our minds to distort God's truth, convincing us to see circumstances from our perspective rather than believing what God tells us.

- We often wake up in the morning and begin the day by succumbing to Satan's lies.
 - The alarm clock didn't go off.
 - We wake up and are running late,
 - the kids are already squabbling and fussing;
 - it's raining outside, and we think in exasperation,

It's going to be one of those days!

The day begins with a defeatist attitude.

The devil is against us, the world is around us, and the flesh is within us, collaborating to defeat us in our Christian walk.

Who's report will you BELIEVE?

- **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.*