Spiritual Warfare

& the Armor of God

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Put Away Ignorance!
Some Christians are ignorant of the operations of the devil. They don’t understand what areas that a demon can attack a believer. Some are ignorant to the point that they believe that a demon cannot influence a Christian at all. This is falling right into Satan's trap; it allows his covert operations to remain undetected and intact. He can accomplish much more in darkness than when exposed. Satan has the legal right to traffic in the realm of darkness, whether a Christian is there or not. The devil knows that his time is short, and he is on a rampage of destruction. This is not the time to be ignorant of Satan's devices. Listen to the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 2:11:

Lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

The word "ignorant" is taken from the Greek word agnoeo, it means "to be ignorant, to have no discernment of, failure to understand; to commit a fault arising from the lack of discernment." Many Christians open the door for demonic involvement because of a lack of discernment. Two-thirds of organized Christendom has no understanding of the spirit world. Therefore, Satan has the advantage over them. The spirit world is more real than the material world. Everything we see in the material realm was first conceived in the spirit realm. This domain is where Satan and his demons operate, as well as the angels of the Lord.

Some Christians think that as long as they believe, they cannot be harmed by demonic forces. This type of believing is only mental assent and not heart faith.

TURN TO: James 2:19

Satan's Assignment
We must know that Christians are the special object of Satan's hatred, for they represent God in the earth. He already has the people of the world under his control; he need not bother with them. Two classes of people receive special attention from Satan:

1. Those working for him
2. Those working against him
If you are working against him, he has an assignment out on you. The good news is that the blood of Jesus has already defeated him and the Holy Spirit will give you discernment and power to overcome!

The Christian must "keep" himself if he is to remain free from demonic involvement. Let us note right here that a true Christian cannot be demon possessed! The purpose of this lesson is to show you that there are areas that Satan is working against Christians that exclude possession. These are the areas in which we must guard our hearts. 1 John 5:18 says:

**We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.**

A more complete rendering of this would be "whoever is born of God does not practice sin." There is a keeping process involved for the believer, using the blood, the Word and the name of Jesus – the weapons of our warfare.

**KEY:** The original Greek word for "touch" in this verse means "to handle in such a way as to influence, to manipulate." The entry level workings of Satan are centered in manipulation.

Notice the Word says that there is a condition on our part if we are to be protected from Satan's assignments. The more effective a Christian is at doing the will of God, the more elaborate and sophisticated the assignment of Satan is against him. The Apostle Paul himself said, "Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I Paul, time and again--but Satan hindered us" (I Thessalonians 2:18).

Jesus told us in Matthew 6:22-24 that light could be turned into darkness:

**Matthew 6:**

22 The lamp of the body is the eye, if therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.
23 But if your eye is bad [margin: evil or unhealthy], your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness how great is that darkness.

24 No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

We need to examine this process of light turning into darkness. It does not happen all at once, it is a gradual process. A Christian has the legal right to say “NO!” to the devil at any time. As a believer, we cannot say, "The devil made me do it." Satan can take no ground other than what we yield. Now, let us look at how to take back the ground you may have already forfeited.

The Armor of God
Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, outlined the Christian soldier’s responsibilities and armor.

Ephesians 6:
10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.
11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Paul uses a word in these statements on two occasions that comes from the original Greek root word dynamoo. It is the word from which “dynamite” is derived. Paul is speaking of an explosive power in the believer’s life. The word is translated “strong” in verse 10 and “able” in verse 11. This power comes from one source – the Holy Spirit.

It requires the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome the wiles of the devil. I continually emphasize how the devil gains the advantage over the believer – it is through schemes, deceit, lies, and trickery. He has been stripped of all legitimate authority.

Paul next goes on to describe the nature of our conflict:
Ephesians 6:12:
For we do not wrestle with 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.

Paul could have used any of a number of terms here instead of wrestling. He had perfect command of the Greek language and could have picked a word such as fight, contend or oppose. Why did Paul choose wrestle? Quite simply, it denotes actual contact combat. One can, fight without contact; one can contend or oppose without contact, but have you ever seen anyone try to wrestle without contact? It is impossible! Our conflict with demons is on a contact basis. They are always coming against us in a tangible way, buffeting us in the flesh.

2 Corinthians 12:7
And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

It is interesting that the Greek word for “buffet” here is kolaphizo and means “to strike with the fist.” Again, Paul gives us such graphic word pictures. Here, the messenger [Gr. Angelos] or angel of Satan is seen as physically punching Paul with his fist. How can anyone fail to see the nature of the conflict that we, as believers, are in?

The Devil’s Org Chart
Revealed in Ephesians 6:12 are four levels of demon power:

1. **Principalities**: Lower level demons that we most commonly deal with on a personal, daily level.
2. **Powers**: Also lower level demons in Satan's chain of command. (The term "lower level" does not denote insignificance, only rank).
3. **Rulers of Darkness**: Demons that rule over territories, and have lower level demons under their command.
4. **Wicked Spirits in Heavenly Places**: This of course being the second heaven, the atmosphere above (see Ephesians 2:2). This is where Satan's government is carried out. In this place
are the highest rank of demons, including Satan himself and his fallen arch-angels. They rule over entire nations, such as the Prince of Persia in Daniel’s day. Their job is to mastermind and to see that evil prevails against the church (a losing cause, by the way) and covers the earth.

The following is an organizational chart of the devil’s operations.

Listen to the words of Gabriel, the Arch Angel, when addressing Daniel regarding his prayer and the spiritual battle that played out in the spirit realm:

Daniel 10:
12 Then he said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words.
13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.
14 Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come.”

Satan did not want this revelation concerning the end times to get to Daniel and opposed the messenger of God, Gabriel. Assistance had to be obtained from Michael, the warring Arch Angel, to break through. It is important to remember that there will be no significant breakthrough from God in your life that will not be contested by the enemy. But let it
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be clear that God heard Daniel on the first day and sent the answer. It is upon us to stand and not to give place to the devil with double-mindedness and unbelief.

This wrestling match which Paul spoke of was an effective allegory because the readers of his letter understood of what a Greek wrestling match was composed. A winner was declared when one of the wrestlers successfully pinned the neck area of his opponent. The loser was made to endure a terrible and painful blinding by the gauging out of the eyes. All that lose this spiritual wrestling match also endure a blinding, a loss of spiritual discernment.

The good news is that, as believers, we are fighting from the place of victory and not to get to the victory. What do you do from the place of victory? You stand.

Ephesians 6:
13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
14 Stand therefore...

**KEY:** In order to stand for the breakthrough, one must have “done all” before taking the final stand. Meaning, have you done what the Word says to do?

In answer to this hierarchy of demonic power arrayed against us, the believers are to put on the whole armor of God as detailed in Ephesians 6:14-18:

Ephesians 6:
14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,
15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;
16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.
17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;
18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. 
19 and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel.

1. **The Belt of Truth** (v 14): Truth and integrity of heart is what holds the armor together. When one departs from God’s truth and personal integrity all else is out of place.

2. **Breastplate of Righteousness** (v 14): The breastplate covers the vital organs such as the heart. It is the righteousness of God in Christ that covers us. All of our righteousness is as filthy rags. His righteousness must be go beyond a legal fact to an experiential reality in our lives if true protection is to be found.

3. **Gospel Shoes** (v 15): The center of the believer's life must be focused on evangelism. This puts our attention and concerns on the needs of others. When our focus is self-centered in our Christian walk, there is a hole in the armor.

4. **Shield of Faith** (v 16): Faith quenches all of the fiery darts of the wicked one. When Satan was attacking Simon Peter, it was Peter's faith that Jesus prayed for (Luke 22:31-32). It is the faith of God in our hearts that overcomes the world (I John 5:4). Faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

5. **Helmet of Salvation** (v 17): The helmet covers the head area, the mind. The importance of protecting the thought life cannot be emphasized enough. Here once again it is reiterated to us that we need to cover our minds with God's armor. More often than not this is the place that Satan finds access.

**TURN TO:** 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

We are to cast down imaginations and take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. There are two areas of the mind that Satan wants control of: 1) the memory, to *replay* the past; and 2) the imagination, to *pre-play* the future.
6. **Sword of the Spirit (Word of God)** (v 17): This is the only offensive weapon in our arsenal. "Word" here is the Greek word *rhema*, meaning "the intimate personal word from God as spoken through His overall Word." In other words, it is not head knowledge of the Word that will defeat the devil. It is the revelation knowledge of the Word spoken out of our mouths from the spirit that will drive back the enemy. This is the weapon that Jesus Himself employed during His wilderness temptation. Three times Jesus declared "IT IS WRITTEN!" until Satan had to flee!

7. **Prayer** (vv 18-19): This is not a weapon per say, but the place in which the weapons are engaged. The armor is not a mythical metaphor without any practical value. The armor is dynamic in its working when employed in prayer. This is the battle ground, where the battle is fought and won. Satan trembles when the weakest saint of God gets on his knees to pray. Satan is not fearful of men of standing, but rather men of kneeling.

There are different kinds of prayer listed here by Paul:

- **Prayer in the Spirit**: There are levels of prayer that can only be accomplished in the Spirit. Praying in other tongues in intercession opens up a whole new arena of power in our lives, for Satan has no power over our heavenly language.

- **Supplication**: This refers to making specific requests to God. If you are looking for a generic answer then make a generic prayer. If you need something specific then first make sure it lines up with the Word of God and then pray specifically.

- **Watchful Prayer**: This is intercessory prayer. Essentially, it is taking up God’s cause and going through the birthing process until the Holy Spirit releases you – or when you have “given birth” in the Spirit.

- **Persevering Prayer**: There are times when the believer must ask... seek... and knock in order to get the answer. Jesus also called this persistent prayer – a refusal to be denied (Luke 11:5-8).
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- **Prayer for God’s Leaders:** In verse 19 Paul clearly expressed the need for the saints to pray for him that God would give him utterance and that he would speak boldly. Much of what is coming forth from the pulpit is based on the prayer of the church. If the church wants a prophetic word from God, then much prayer is required.

When Jesus commissioned and sent forth the 70 disciples, he gave them power over unclean spirits in His-name. Luke 10:17 records their triumphant return:

Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name!"

Jesus responded to them by saying:

**Behold, I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. (Luke 10:19)**

Notice the play on words between "authority" and "power." This is vital to our understanding. Satan has never lost his power. He is not a toothless lion as some depict. If this were so, why would there be four billion people under his control (see Revelation 12:9)? Why would there be so much violence and suffering in the world? He has not lost his power.

**KEY:** Jesus did not say that He would give us more *power* than the devil. He said He has given us AUTHORITY over his power.

In 1 Timothy 4:1, the Apostle Paul said that in the last days there would be:

- A great departure from the Faith.
- Seducing spirits sent into all the earth.
- Doctrines of demons taught as the doctrines of God.

As believers, we must rise up in the authority that God has given us. This is not a *game* that we are in, but real warfare. Up to this point, many
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have been losing the battle. If you see any place in your life that Satan
has taken the advantage, please repent and recapture that forfeited
ground. God wants you walking in complete victory!

Practical ways to put this teaching into practice:

1. **Educate yourself in the Word of God on how Satan operates.** Scripture has much to say about our adversary’s methods. Spend 30 minutes a day studying the Word of God. Begin in the New Testament and lay the foundation of understanding before you explore the Old Testament in depth. Of particular importance are passages about the nature of God, who you are in Christ, the spiritual weapons given by God and the tactics of the devil.

2. **Live a life of holiness.** Satan still has authority in the realm of darkness. If you choose to go onto the devil’s playground, expect to be harmed. Put away from you all that contaminates the soul.

3. **Put on the Armor of God:** No, I’m not talking about some imaginary suit. Apply the principles for which the armor stands.
   a. Have integrity and speak the truth.
   b. Appropriate the righteousness of God in your life.
   c. Share Christ with others.
   d. Be prepared to exercise faith when the devil opposes you.
   e. Protect your thought life. Garbage in – garbage out.
   f. Speak the Word of God and apply it in every situation.

4. **Commit to being a Prayer Warrior.** Change happens because of prayer. Put into practice the different types of prayer listed. The focus of your *entire* prayer time cannot be your personal needs.