

3 Mighty Weapons to Win the Spiritual Fight for Your Marriage

Don't you sometimes just want to *throw something*? Anything. At anybody. You know it won't fix things, but it might help you feel better!

That urge may be stronger than ever in your marriage. I get it. Your spouse doesn't meet your needs. You're frustrated. Miserable. Upset. Lonely. Maybe even angry. There's no connection happening between you. You feel as though you're sleeping with the enemy.

You struggle with blaming your spouse. If only they would care about you just a little, take a little initiative, quit nagging, or try listening for a change. And when you're not blaming your spouse, you see yourself as a complete failure. Why can't you make things work? Could there be something terribly wrong with you?

A million things could be affecting your marriage negatively: your spouse's mistakes, your own mistakes, differing personalities and expectations, lack of communication, busyness, financial or parenting hardships, sickness, extended family problems, and many more.

But none of these are the real enemy of your marriage.

And the enemy of your marriage is certainly *not* your spouse, regardless of how misguided or lazy or inconsiderate they may be.

Behind all the junk, the unrealistic media messages, the personal failings, the conflict and the busyness and the

overwhelming problems life brings, there *is* someone who is out to destroy your marriage. He's behind the culture of divorce and infidelity, the addiction and abuse, and the apathy that often sets in when marriage misery takes root. **The enemy of your marriage is God's enemy—Satan and his kingdom.**

Naming the Enemy

As with our national security, so it is with your marriage—if you cannot identify and name your enemy, you cannot defeat him. As long as you focus on fighting each other or blaming yourself, your marriage will continue to slide into further misery with each failed request for intimacy, each unmet expectation, each day spent hopelessly wishing your spouse would change.

But you can defeat the enemy of your marriage when you recognize that all the junk coming against you is coming from only one place: Satan and his kingdom.

Sure, you need to learn better communication. You need to learn how to forgive. Your spouse needs to do the same. The old baggage you're carrying through your marriage must be discarded. Sickness or money problems need to be dealt with. But when you see all these arrows as being sent from the same evil source you can fight them so much more effectively.

That does *not* mean you pray a few—or many—spiritual warfare prayers and everything magically gets better. It might! And there are many marriages where that kind of miracle does happen. But it may also mean that naming your enemy puts you, and hopefully your spouse, in a position to work together with God to build the kind of marriage that will be one of the greatest-ever arguments against the kingdom of darkness.

What About My Spouse?

Spiritual warfare in your marriage is not about praying for God to whip your spouse into shape because they have failed

you! It's really not much about your spouse at all. It's about clearing the way for God to do the work He wants to do in both of you.

If your spouse is a believer, you may both be able to have this "light-bulb" moment about who your enemy really is, and align yourselves together to seek God in the process. Joining hands and fighting the enemy together—rather than directing your arrows at each other—will make a huge difference.

If your spouse is not a believer, your own spiritual warfare can also make a difference. Whether or not your spouse changes, you can change. Your own response to your spouse can become wise, courageous, kind and loving—regardless of what they are or aren't doing. And perhaps in the process God will use you to draw your spouse closer to Himself.

How to Fight and Win

Applying spiritual warfare principles to your troubled marriage is not for the faint of heart! Remember, the enemy cares so much about your marriage because he knows how much destruction a troubled marriage can bring, and how much damage a healthy godly marriage can do to his kingdom of darkness.

Here's how you can make that fight successful.

1. Name your enemy.

It's easy to see your spouse as the enemy when they do—or don't do—whatever it is they do. It takes a decided effort to step outside of your immediate emotions and look behind it all to identify the problem, and the enemy himself.

Practice pausing when you find yourself getting upset at your spouse. Learn to ask yourself, "What's really going on here?" You will undoubtedly mess up and respond out of your human frustration, pain or anger. But when you do, just pause again and remember who your real enemy is—Satan and his kingdom.

2. Focus first on yourself.

Your spouse may well be a jerk, in one or many ways. That's not the point. Where have you responded poorly? Or enabled bad behavior? Or justified your own selfishness or anger because of your spouse's actions?

You know you can't change anyone but yourself. And in many ways you can't even do that. You need God's intervention in your own life right now. A friend of mine recommends asking this question: "Who is God calling you to be in your marriage right now?" It's a good question to contemplate and pray about.

3. Pray with and for your spouse.

Prayer may not make your problem magically disappear. If it does, be grateful! But prayer is absolutely indispensable in defeating the enemy of your marriage. Remember, Jesus defeated Satan completely and for good; your role is to walk out that victory in your own circumstances.

Pray for God's direction in what He would have *you* do. Ask Him to bless your spouse. And if your spouse is willing, pray together, out loud if you can. Invite God to intervene in your marriage, and to make it the demonstration of the work only He can do in two peoples' lives.

Remember, the outcome does not only depend on you; it also depends on your spouse's response. They have free choice just as you do. But looking at your marriage problems from this perspective will be energizing and empowering, and will help you focus your energy on coming against the real enemy of your marriage rather than fighting each other.

You really can experience Christ's victory in your marriage.

Have you been fighting your spouse? Are you ready to join

forces to fight the true enemy of your marriage? I'd love to hear from you if this perspective is helpful. Please let me know in the comments below.

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