

Does Everyone Get This Much Spiritual Warfare?

Just the day before I was (barely) sitting up talking to a friend, trying to swallow semi-solid food after catching some violent virus my daughter brought home from the mission field.

This was less than a week after discovering news so devastating I had no choice but to trade sleep for prayer just to maintain. And that was only a week after someone in my inner circle launched such a vicious verbal attack against me that I wondered how I'd misjudged his character so badly.

I could go on and on. That was just the last 14 days of many where it seems all hell was breaking loose against me. Call it a season of **spiritual warfare**. Call it a trial. Call it tribulation. Whatever you call it, I was growing weary in well doing and felt like I was about to faint. And I was whining to my friend about the ongoing onslaught. Whining, and questioning: "Do you think everyone gets this much **spiritual warfare** or am I doing something really wrong?"

Why So Much Spiritual Warfare?

I mean, most of my friends are dealing with the occasional common cold, cranky kid or flat tire. Meanwhile, I'm laid out flat on my back with some strange illness while trying to process devastating news and enduring a Judas. Sometimes I wish I had my friends' problems instead of mine, but that's really not the right attitude, is it?

The Bible says, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). The Bible also says, "Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has

been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him" (James 1:12).

Amen. But that didn't answer my question: Does everyone get this much **spiritual warfare** or am I doing something wrong? The Bible says, "Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4:12-13).

Amen. I could go on and on with Scripture that tells us we will have tribulation but to take heart; with Scripture that tells us to be patient in tribulation; with Scripture that tells us we are blessed when others revile and **persecute** us and say all kinds of evil against us falsely because of Jesus. And I'll say amen and amen. But that still doesn't answer my question: Does everyone get this much **spiritual warfare** or am I doing something wrong?

A Supernatural Revelation

I'd have my answer the next morning when I met Rob Hoskins, president of OneHope, an international children's evangelism ministry. I was interviewing him for a cover story for *Charisma* magazine later this year. I had missed my first interview with him because I was plastered to my bed with the virus I mentioned. He was gracious enough to reschedule. Honestly, I had no idea the night before how I'd make the 30-minute drive and sit upright through the three-hour interview except for the grace of God. I was still that ill.

When I met Rob, I quickly discovered why Paul said it's not wise to compare (2 Cor. 10:12). After serving me an espresso, Rob sat down at the conference room table and within two minutes I'd learned that he almost died last year from what the World Health Organization called the deadliest E. coli outbreak on record. Through that incident he discovered he had a fast-growing form of prostate cancer that could quickly move

through the bladder wall and spread like wildfire through his body. Now that's **spiritual warfare**. He miraculously survived to tell the story with a smile.

When he got done telling that tale, he shared his testimony of nearly going blind some years ago. Doctors told him they would try to save his eyes, but there wasn't much hope. His daughter was only a month old when he underwent pneumatic retinopexy, a surgery in which doctors take out the eye, put a gas bubble behind it, reinsert the eye and then leave you lying face down for six weeks to heal. The father of lies invaded Rob's room in the night hours and fear gripped his heart.

"God, if I can't see my daughter, if I can't see my wife, why did you put this vision and burden in me for the nations? Now I am going to be a blind man. I'd just rather die. Just take me now," Hoskins said just before finally surrendering all to the Lord in complete consecration to His will—even if that meant blindness.

After his wife laid hands on him and started praying, the presence of Jesus filled the room and Rob received three Scripture passages and a confirmation that he would be healed gradually. Now that's **spiritual warfare**. He was miraculously healed and you can see the sparkle of joy in his eyes when he glorifies His healer.

Learning to Trust God More

The point of the story was that the Lord wanted Rob to trust Him at greater levels. By trusting God through the attack of blindness—trusting Him for this gradual healing—Hoskins would be able to believe God for the miracles it would take to head a global ministry that aims to reach every child with God's Word by 2030. After experiencing that attack so long ago, the and cancer wasn't so daunting. (Wow!)

Through faith and trust, God delivered Hoskins from blindness. God delivered him from . God delivered him from cancer. And I

am sure God delivered him from other perils he didn't have time to share with me. As I sat there listening, all I could think of was how small my battles are compared to his. And that's not to say that I haven't faced some intense **spiritual battles** because I have. (I'm sure you have, too.) At some level, it's all relative. That's why we can't compare our spiritual warfare to another man's spiritual warfare. It's just not wise to compare.

And so God gave me the answer to the question I was asking just 12 hours earlier: "Do you think everyone gets this much spiritual warfare or am I doing something really wrong?" No, everyone doesn't get as much **spiritual warfare** as I do (or as you do). But some people get more—far more. And no, I'm not doing anything wrong—I haven't opened a door to the enemy. Quite the contrary, I'm advancing the kingdom of God and I'm a threat to the powers of darkness.

So are you, and you should remember that next time you take a hit for righteousness. Don't whine about the spiritual warfare. Rise above it. After all, you are seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Don't fear the spiritual warfare. Trust God. Paul put it best when he said, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7). Amen.

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