

Gear Up for War

If we succeed in these difficult days it will be, in part, because we have renounced the seductive limitations that accompany a peacetime mentality. Indeed, we must embrace an aspect of spirituality that is unfamiliar to many Christians—one that is both militant and vigilant toward evil, yet compelled by the purity and fire of Christ's love.

The Holy Spirit has been calling the church to rise in intercessory prayer and to exercise spiritual authority. With holy urgency in my heart, I say we do not have time to languish in self-pity about life's injustices.

In a time of war we must not be distracted by inconveniences or grievances. We must possess a war mentality. The good news is that hell would not be in such a frenzy if heaven were not advancing. God is working to bring revival and spiritual awakening to our nations.

Thus, while we face concern about the advance of evil, we can be encouraged that evil is being met with resistance by many among the people of God. The enemy's multifaceted attacks will be repulsed and even reversed as we stand and fight.

My immediate appeal is for us to war in prayer with passion and confidence. Remember, as the church of Jesus Christ, we are not fighting against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers and the world rulers of darkness (Eph. 6:12). These ruling spirits hold influence over every nation and culture on Earth; we must all be involved.

Whatever efforts we make in the natural realm, our focus and victory originate from the spiritual realm. According to Hebrews 11:3, "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible" (NASB).

Things visible come from things invisible. So we must war in prayer using the Word of God as our primary weapon and the blood of Christ as our primary defense.

Peace Is Not Passive

I often hear the argument: "Our nation may be in a war, but I am a peacemaker like Jesus. The Lord has not called me to war."

I, too, am a peacemaker. At the core of my quest for Christ-likeness is the ministry of reconciliation and peacemaking.

Scripture says, "The seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace" (James 3:18). This means we must never forget that our message is the gospel of peace.

At the same time, it is the "God of peace" who has chosen to "crush Satan under [our] feet" (Rom. 16:20). Peace has a militant side. True peace manifests because we have confronted and overcome our spiritual enemies.

The problem is that too many Christians have confused peace with passivity. They have hollow peace instead of hallowed peace. Their lives are prayerless and they live in perpetual compromise with heaven's enemies. This is not peace; it is bondage.

Jesus was the quintessential peacemaker, yet He boldly confronted the advance of evil. And He did so with unbending righteousness and unsheathed spiritual authority. Christ terrified the demonic realm.

At His approach, evil spirits howled in trembling dread: "Have You come here to torment us before the time?" (Matt. 8:29). Jesus was operating in the war mode and they knew it.

Not only did Jesus exercise authority over every demonic hierarchical stratum up to Satan himself, but also He told the disciples that the works He did, including those of spiritual

warfare, they would also do (John 14:12).

The disciples were trained to function in the war mode: They learned discernment, understood authority and usually engaged in the fight of deliverance with perseverance.

Jesus specifically gave them authority over the enemy's power. Observe these Scriptures:

- "Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness" (Matt. 10:1).
- "And He appointed 12, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out the demons" (Mark 3:14-15).
- "And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them" (Mark 6:13).
- "These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues" (Mark 16:17).

- "And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases" (Luke 9:1). And He assured the disciples that "nothing [would] injure" them (Luke 10:19).

Of course, He taught them to walk in purity and built into their souls certain fundamental safeguards. Yet after preparing and commissioning His disciples with His authority, He ministered faith to them, not fear.

When I read the Scriptures, it is plain to me that Jesus was always operating in a mode of spiritual aggression toward the powers of hell. He was perfectly God-focused, but His radar was continuously sensing the enemy's advance into His world.

When Peter sought to dissuade Jesus from accepting the cross,

Jesus discerned in Peter's words the voice of Satan. Speaking directly to the spirit manipulating Peter, Jesus rebuked the prince of devils, driving him from the thought life of the apostle.

When Jesus sent out the 70 disciples, they went forth in a war mode. When they returned from their mission, they marveled that even demons were subject to them in Christ's name (Luke 10:1-20).

Jesus commanded His disciples to follow Him into heaven's battles. He said to them: "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven" (Luke 10:20).

I know we picture Jesus as eternally kind and unfathomably gentle, and such He was with the victims of life's injustices. His compassion was also an act of war against evil.

Yet the disciple who wrote that God is love and whose ear listened to Christ's very heartbeat also said: "The Son of God also appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

Do we see this about Christ? Jesus came not only to restore and redeem a fallen world but also to "destroy the works of the devil."

As a follower of Christ, have you destroyed anything evil lately? Have you toppled any demonic strongholds this week? Have you rescued anyone imprisoned in sin or fear or demonic captivity?

Evil can be destroyed in a hundred different ways, not merely in a "deliverance" session. The sad truth is, historically, too many of us have neither a plan nor a prayer to see evil truly destroyed.

We need an attitude toward evil. Imagine if, in addition to

fulfilling our other spiritual disciplines and virtues, every Christian began truly to pray with the authority of Jesus Christ.

Without exaggerating the role of the devil, consider the heavenly impact praying Christians would have if we all renounced passivity, unbelief and fear. Paul said: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God" (2 Cor. 10:4, NKJV). Imagine if we actually used them!

Awaken Your War Mode

Planet Earth is not a place of peace but a realm at war. From the casting out of Lucifer and his angels from heaven, to the temptation in the Garden of Eden, to Babylon and the multiplication of nations under satanic influence, ours has been an embattled world.

The idea that somehow our era is less threatened by evil is the height of deception. We must fight if we will follow Christ into victory.

No matter how beautiful the world around us seems, remember there was a serpent lurking in paradise itself. If Adam and Eve had possessed a war-mode mentality, they never would have accepted the lies of Lucifer so casually.

Likewise today, we need to be wise and walk carefully for "the days are evil" (Eph. 5:16, NASB). You see, Jesus was always aware that He lived in a war zone. No matter what He was doing—whether He was laughing with sinners or driving out demons, whether He was healing the sick or training followers—beneath the surface of His outer activities, the "war mode switch" in Jesus' mind was always on.

I know there are women who find warfare a solely macho topic. I have heard a few women argue: "I'm just a housewife, a mom. I don't have a war mode."

If your child were seriously sick, wouldn't you fight that illness with everything at your disposal? You would fast and pray, and you would do so from your war mode. If your marriage were under spiritual attack, wouldn't you get before God and war with fervency? The fact is, you know how to fight.

Ask your husband if he thinks you have a war mode. You just need something to wake it up, because once you begin to shift into the war gear, in the Holy Spirit you are dangerous!

The war mode is in us all. It may be attached to our instinct for survival, but it is more directly connected with our love for people. I love my nation, so I am warring in prayer on its behalf. Because of love for my family, I war in prayer on their behalf.

I love my church, my city and, yes, even my own soul, so I war to protect what I love. If there is a natural fight instinct, there is a spiritual fight mode as well. It just needs to be awakened, submitted to Christ and then unleashed against the enemy. If you have a love mode, you also have a war mode. God has created the war mode so we can protect the people we love.

With God's help, you can begin to love people enough to fight for their well-being. Jesus fought for us and for love gave His all.

We must pattern our lives after His. Let your warfare be an expression of your love for Christ and people.

Read a companion devotional.

Francis Frangipane *is a pastor and the author of many books, including Holiness, Truth and the Presence of God, The Three Battlegrounds (Arrow Publications) and The Stronghold of God (Charisma House).*