

Putting Spiritual Discernment Back Into Spiritual Warfare

I was raised in spiritual warfare. By that I mean, soon  after I got saved I plugged into an **apostolic church** that vowed to run to the battle line to wrestle spirits of Jezebel, witchcraft, religion—and whatever else was opposing the purposes of God.

My church home was akin to a **spiritual war zone**. We were always on red alert through **prophetic warnings**, dreams and visions about the next attack. Indeed, spiritual warfare was a consistent thread in most of the praise, worship, equipping classes, Sunday morning sermons and leadership lessons.

You might call it “extreme apostolic.” We hunted down the demon(s) behind every doorknob like a child with a sweet tooth hunts for chocolate Easter eggs. Looking back, it seemed at times like a contest to determine who could present the most detailed dream or vision about the enemy’s impending plan. Once the enemy was spotted, a shouting match with the principality or power ensued that left you with a sore throat—and no respite from the warfare.

I was in a **spiritual warfare ditch**, where the enemy and his plans were ultimately exalted over God and His plans. Don’t get me wrong. I believe wholeheartedly in spiritual warfare. But we can get into a ditch with any principle if we take it to the extreme. So we have to ask ourselves: What causes us to take biblical principles to the extreme?

There’s no single answer but we can guard ourselves from **deception** by adding balance and soberness of mind to our vigilance. Our enemy is roaming around like a lion seeking someone to seize upon and devour—and getting out of balance opens a door wide enough for him to freely enter (1 Peter 5:8

AMP).

Another **prophetic key** is exercising the **gift of discernment**. (Imagine that!) Over time, some spiritual warriors develop an unwritten checklist of principalities and powers to target—Jezebel, witchcraft, religion, etc.—yet never bind the strongman because they aren't taking a **prophetic perspective**. I wonder how many people are praying rote **spiritual warfare** prayers and seeing no change—and maybe even watching matters getting worse—because the real enemy is allowed to roam free while we recite the same old demon hitlist out of habit.

Why not step back and pray about the root of the matter? When you do, you'll be more successful in battling what's battling you because you open the door wide enough for **Holy Ghost wisdom** to freely enter. It may be that you need to repent for something you are doing that's allowing the devil to manifest in your midst. It could be that when you shut the door to that sin, the devil can no longer gain entrance through the open breach in the wall. Or, it could be that an enemy you've never fought before is attacking you—and you need true **spiritual discernment** to identify the attacker.

Then again, it could be possible that you are in a completely different ditch. Maybe you aren't going on the offense against the devil at all. Maybe you aren't doing your part to protect your spiritual garden from demonic weeds. The problem is, God won't do our part for us. He's given us authority in this earth realm. He's done all He's going to do about the devil. Jesus gave us His authority, as well as **keys to the kingdom**. Whatever we bind on earth is bound in heaven. And whatever we loose on earth is loosed in heaven (Matt. 16:19). In other words, we can't blame God when the devil gets in. We're the ones who allow it.

Again, I started out in an extreme spiritual warfare ditch, where even worship music was an exercise in combat. Yet having escaped a church where strife ruled and reigned—and in which

Jezebel was typically blamed for most of the rumblings in the congregation—I entered into a prophetic church that took an opposite approach. And I entered another spiritual warfare ditch.

During my extended season at this **prophetic church**, I never heard them bind Jezebel once—not even once. I never heard any one come against **witchcraft** or rebuke the **spirit of religion**. All they did was praise and worship the Lord for hours on end and roll around on the floor and laugh. This was unusual for me, perhaps especially so after exiting the extreme apostolic. It was actually refreshing. I enjoyed it—until I realized I was in another ditch when I got blindsided by the enemy.

Yes, our praise and worship in the midst of the battle confuses the enemy and shows our faith in God's deliverance. God likes that. But God is not going to do our part. Although I agree that the battle is the Lord's and we can praise Him knowing He's fighting on our behalf, we still have to be prepared to exercise our God-given authority. David was a worshipper, but he was also a warrior. He knew when to draw a sword, and he knew when to draw praise from his lips unto God.

After living in both extremes, I have learned a lesson: we must all become skilled warriors and **intimate worshippers**. In doing so, we avoid either ditch of extremism and walk in the **discernment** of the Holy Ghost, knowing when to run to the battle line and knowing when to worship.

A wise man once said, "To everything there is a season, and a time for every matter or purpose under heaven (Eccl. 3:1)." When you go to war, go with the right strategy. Sometimes that means **prophetic worship**. Other times it's prophetic warfare. Many times it's a combination of both. Ultimately, Jesus must be the center of our focus. The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is His name (Exodus 15:3). And He is worthy to be praised.

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