

A Woman's Spiritual Arsenal

✖ There are few things that Satan hates worse than Christians on their knees. In fact, it is the enemy's goal to see that the prayers of God's people do not reach heaven. He knows that God has chosen to partner with His people in fulfilling His plans on earth—and prayer is a crucial part of the equation.

Not surprisingly, then, when we come to God in prayer on behalf of others, often we will need to battle against the powers of darkness. Satan knows where people are weak, and he attempts to enter through the weak spots in their lives to take them captive.

Every “weak spot” he exploits becomes an area of bondage—an area where he sets up a “stronghold” in their lives. It is God's will for you, as a believer in Christ, to tear down these strongholds and loose people in areas where they have not been able to freely function.

Fortunately, God has already provided all that is necessary for successful spiritual warfare. Your part is to *will* to use the weapons that His Word guarantees will destroy enemy strongholds. Let's look at four key weapons that lead to victory in prayer:

1. The Name of Jesus: Our Authority

The first weapon in effective spiritual warfare is taking your authority in Christ. The name of Jesus has power on earth, in heaven and in hell. Since you are a temple of His Spirit and the same Holy Spirit dwells in you that was in Christ, you can use His name just as though He Himself were here. “I give you the all the power of the enemy” Jesus promises in Luke 10:19 (NKJV).

The power of the Holy Spirit in you gives you authority to use the name of Jesus to defeat the enemy. It can be likened to a

policeman who can halt a huge truck just by standing in the middle of the highway and holding up his hand to signal "Stop!" The policeman, wearing his badge, has authority behind him to stop traffic and forbid the truck to proceed when a law has been violated. Intercessors, too, must use their delegated authority to stop demonic forces from wreaking havoc with God's people.

Your authority in using the name of Jesus, however, is tied to your personal relationship with Him. That relationship, nurtured by your time of fellowship with the Lord, ensures that you will use this authority *only* in ways that will glorify Him. Notice the example of Peter and John speaking to the lame man at the temple gate in Acts 3:1-8.

On the other hand, note what happened to those who tried to use the name of Jesus without proper authority in Acts 19:11-17. If you are walking in proper relationship to Jesus Christ, the enemy must submit to your authority when you use the name of Jesus (see Mark 16:17,18).

2. The Blood of Jesus: Our Covering

The *name* of Jesus is your power of attorney; the *blood* of Jesus is the official seal that secures your right to use it. When God released the plague of death against Egypt, forcing Pharaoh to free the Jews, God instructed the Jewish people to put the blood of an unblemished lamb over the doorposts of their homes. The angel of death then passed over every house that was covered with the blood of the lamb (see Ex. 12:3-13,29-30).

Today Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God, offers the same kind of protection through the power of His innocent blood shed on Calvary for all those who believe. The blood of Jesus is an effective spiritual weapon because it:

* gives *salvation*, birthing us into His kingdom and keeping us from eternal damnation (see Mark 16:16; John 3:3,17)

* makes *atonement* for us, blotting out our sins (see Lev. 17:11; Rom. 5:11)

* *redeems* us. Our life is paid for in full, bought back from the power of sin and death (see Ps. 107:2; Eph. 1:7; Rev. 5:9).

* *justifies* us and acquits us of sin and guilt (see Acts 13:38-39; Rom. 5:9)

* makes us *righteous* and puts us back into right standing with God (see Is. 59:2; Rom. 3:22-25; 1 John 1:9)

* gives *sanctification*, setting us apart unto God at the time of salvation as well as each day thereafter (see 1 Cor. 1:30; Heb. 10:10,14)

* allows the *remission* of sins (see Rom. 3:24-25; Heb. 9:22)

* *reconciles* us. Accepting God's provision, we can now fellowship with Him in love (see Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:20).

* gives *overcoming power* as we receive and use what has been delegated to us (see Luke 10:19; Rev. 12:11)

* provides *deliverance*, releasing us from the powers of darkness and setting us free (see 2 Cor. 2:14; Col. 1:13)

* releases *forgiveness* and pardons sins (see Col. 1:14; 1 John 1:9)

* establishes a *new covenant* that replaces the old covenant of sacrifices with the perfect sacrifice made through Jesus Christ (see Heb. 7:22; 8:13; 9:15)

* *cleanses* us from all sin (see 1 John 1:7).

"Pleading the blood of Jesus" is a tactic for intercession that has been used by prayer warriors for many, many years. I can personally testify to times when the blood of Jesus has protected me from an onslaught of the enemy.

Because of abuse, however, it has become somewhat controversial. To “plead the blood of Jesus” over a person for his or her protection is simply to remind the enemy of his boundaries. Thank God for the blood of Jesus that washes away our sins and causes the wicked plans of the enemy to pass over us!

3. Agreement: Our Bonding

In addition to understanding the significance of the name and blood of Jesus, it is important that intercessors *agree* with the Holy Spirit on that which He has called them to accomplish through spiritual warfare. “Agreement” means “to harmonize, to live in concord, without contention.” We are all called to be consistent in our prayers with the Word and with the Spirit. And to be consistent, we must keep our hearts free from division so we remain unified with other believers.

Agreement, or unity, can be both an offensive and a defensive weapon. When a wolf wants to kill a lamb, he waits until it strays from the flock. The lamb is then unable to defend itself because it is alone.

In the company of others, the lamb is protected. We find safety by bonding in agreement with other believers and staying close to the Shepherd.

Agreement begins with a God-focus and a heart that is close to Him. When your heart is knit to the Lord, He then will knit you together with others to accomplish more than you could ever accomplish alone. This is the “threefold cord” that Solomon wrote about in Ecclesiastes 4:12.

Prayer alliances with others of like spirit can increase your warfare effectiveness. Jesus said: “If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them”

(Matt. 18:19-20).

Learning to pray in agreement is also learning to pray in God's will. As your mind is transformed, you will discover the perfect will of God and be in agreement with Him through His Word (see Rom. 12:2).

Scripture warns about what could happen if you are in agreement over something ungodly. When Ananias and his wife Sapphira agreed to tell a lie, their plot cost them their lives (see Acts 5:1-11).

You may ask, "What if I make a mistake?" Rest assured: If your heart is right and your motives are pure, God's grace will abound. Agree with what the Word tells you or the Holy Spirit brings to your mind. Invite the Holy Spirit to be present before you even start to pray, and pray in one accord with Him.

4. Binding and Loosing: Our Keys

Once you have come into agreement with the Holy Spirit, you will need to use your power of attorney in Christ Jesus to stop the plans of hell and release the purposes of heaven. Jesus has given His followers two effective weapons for doing this: *binding* and *loosing*. They are "kingdom keys" used to put a lock on Satan's power and unlock the power of God: "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:19).

James M. Freeman, in his book *Manners and Customs of the Bible*, explains the common usage in Jewish schools for the words "bind" and "loose." To "bind" is to "forbid," and to "loose" is to "allow." In the Aramaic language, which Jesus used, it was a customary expression to denote the use of the highest authority.

And as one Bible translator points out, the verb form in

Matthew 16:19 is the perfect passive participle, meaning that things bound or loosed are in a state of *having already been forbidden (or permitted)*. Whatever is bound or loosed by the believer is done on the basis that it has *already been done* in heaven.

Matthew 12:29 gives us further insight: "Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house." The context of this passage finds Jesus casting out demons. The Greek word for "bind" in the verse means "to fasten or tie—as with chains—as an animal tied to keep from leaving."

Every individual believer has the right and authority to call down or resist the devil and bind the "strong man." You as an individual will be singled out and challenged by the spirits of darkness. Or you will be called into war against the powers over your home, church, city or beyond.

In order to bind the strong man, you must first know who the strong man is—whether a demonic principality, a power, a "ruler of darkness" or a "spiritual host of wickedness" in heavenly places (see Eph. 6:12). This is discerned through prayer and often fasting (see Matt. 17:21).

To what then does *loosing* refer? To setting the captive free! The Greek word for "loose" is defined as "to loose anything tied or fastened; to loose one bound; to set free; to discharge from prison. To free from bondage or disease (one held by Satan) by restoration to health." Jesus used the term in this context when He healed the woman who had been sick for 18 years: "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity" (Luke 13:12).

To *bind* is to secure the enemy with pressure so he cannot move. To *loose* is to gain liberty using the Word of God. Binding refers to the enemy, while loosing refers to the victory.

There is no formula for binding and loosing. It must be done by revelation of His Spirit. But binding and loosing demonic spirits or spiritual powers is definitely something you do not want to do without knowledge of what you are doing. When calling down strongholds, you may want to assist another in prayer and agreement as you learn—but never work alone.

You must also know your spiritual jurisdiction. The hierarchy of darkness understands authority and the chain of command of God's people. Moving without the proper authority is very dangerous to you and can create havoc within the church in which you are ministering.

Remember, we are enlisted in God's army. This is war! But 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 is clear: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds." The war is God's. The weapons are God's. And so is the victory.

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