

Spiritual Warfare Strategies to Keep You Faithful During Your Trials

Jesus is the captain of the host, the Lord of heaven's armies, who has triumphed over the enemy. As His followers, we have been commissioned to go in His name and authority to stand against the defeated powers of darkness to advance God's kingdom.

Satan and his minions are fearful of a church who understands its position and authority in Christ. The authority of the believer is more than a concept; it is a powerful truth that, when exercised, provides significant kingdom results.

Every military leader knows that using an effective strategy is necessary to wage successful warfare. Jesus, our military commander, gives us principles to build an effective strategy against the kingdom of darkness. Yes, this kingdom is defeated in Christ, but its representatives are still active in our world oppressing humanity until the full consummation of God's kingdom on earth at the return of Jesus. Until then, we are overcomers in Christ who must use His authority to stand against evil and to free others oppressed by demonic powers. Let's examine this important subject more closely.

Remember, Jesus said that He came to give life—not just ordinary existence, but life in fullness, abundance and prosperity.

Jesus said, "The thief does not come, except to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Consider the contrast: The thief (Satan and his minions) wants to rob and destroy, but God wants you to overflow excessively

with His love, grace and provision!

Abundant living begins with a devoted relationship to Jesus. He is your life, your source, your joy and hope. He is the author and finisher of your faith. The enemy begins to rob us when we take our eyes off Jesus, when we allow our hearts to dim toward Him.

Don't Let the Enemy Rob You

Remember, two kingdoms exist: God's kingdom and Satan's kingdom, diametrically opposed to each other in our world. Satan wants to destroy humanity.

When you became a believer, you were immediately placed into God's family and kingdom—isn't that great news? However, being part of God's family doesn't eliminate the adversary who wants to stop you, rob you and destroy you! Consider what Paul and Peter wrote:

"We aren't fighting against human enemies but against rulers, authorities, forces of cosmic darkness, and spiritual powers of evil in the heavens" (Eph. 6:12, CEB).

Second Corinthians 4:4 says Satan is the "god of this age," and 2 Corinthians 2:11 says "we are well aware of his schemes." Satan is defeated; Jesus triumphed over him (Col. 2:15), but he is still roaming about!

"Be sober and watchful, because your adversary the devil walks around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him firmly in the faith" (1 Pet. 5:8-9a, MEV). In the animal kingdom, most predators lie in wait for the vulnerable—the same is true spiritually. Yes, Jesus is greater, and His grace covers us, but we are also called to be spiritually alert so as not to fall victim to the evil one.

The enemy comes to rob you of God's blessings, to oppress your soul and body through hardships and sickness, and to destroy

everything that we love and hold dear.

Satan has been stripped of his power, but he attempts to distract you from Jesus (temptation), to get you to believe his lies about yourself (shame) and to get you to be focused on your past sin and failure (condemnation).

When you dwell completely in Christ, temptation has no allure! As you mature in Christ, renew your mind to your true identity, live out of the truth of God's Word and allow your heart to be healed of life's hurts, you can live free from shame and condemnation. His lies now have no power over you! Destiny begins here, living free in Christ.

In Christ, your sin nature is gone, you are made righteous and you are becoming more like Him as you follow Him. You must have more faith in God's ability to protect and keep you than in the enemy's ability to attack you. Yes, warfare at times occurs, but Jesus is greater!

"He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4b)—know this as truth!

Effective Strategies for Spiritual Warfare

Our focus is upon Jesus—His authority and might. We are enthroned with Him and live from His victory. We pray from heaven toward earth, from a place of victory, not from earth begging for a victory!

News flash: God is so sovereign that He trusts us and has given us free will. This means you have a choice to walk faithfully with God, complete in His authority and victory, or to live a double-minded life. Faithfulness builds confidence in the heart of the believer to pray with authority and to expect answers to prayer!

We use the authority Jesus has given us to bring His rule and domain in our world. We aren't fighting against human enemies

but unseen spiritual forces that are at work.

Our goal is not to be warfare-conscious, but praise-conscious. In other words, our praise and prayer are positive, from our relationship with King Jesus, being confident in His authority, power and might to intervene. We are inviting Jesus and the kingdom to rule.

We need to be Christ-centric, not demon-centric!

Understand that even Jesus experienced spiritual warfare, but He wasn't focused on the enemy. Here are a couple of examples:

In Luke 4:1-13, we read how Jesus was tempted in the wilderness by Satan three times, and each time Jesus responded, "It is written!" *His warfare was a declaration of truth.* He didn't take the bait, giving into ego or allure of power; He stayed anchored in truth and His true identity. Jesus could say later regarding Satan, "he has come and has nothing in me." No hook, no entry point for the enemy to compromise Him.

Knowing God's Word and His nature keeps you anchored in truth. Truth is not just a concept. Truth is a person, Jesus Christ. Know Him intimately and you will understand truth.

Another example is in Luke 10:17-20:

"The seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us through Your name.' He said to them, 'I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Look, I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. And nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.'"

Seventy disciples return after being sent and used by God to heal and deliver the oppressed. *Jesus, indirectly, explains an*

important principle about spiritual warfare—kingdom ministry dethrones the enemy. Again, Jesus wasn't focused on the enemy in His prayer life; He just went about healing and delivering people, then instructed His disciples to do the same—that includes us!

Another example of spiritual warfare was in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus told the sleepy disciples, "Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41).

Our warfare is not against human enemies but unseen spiritual forces. Staying spiritually alert and consistent in prayer empowers you to remain faithful during temptation and trial.
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To read more about spiritual warfare, check out this e-book for only \$: The Spiritual Warfare Strategy Guide.

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