

PRAYER AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE
Prayer and Intercession
Resource Ministries
By Jim and Jean Stephens

"And when you come before God, don't turn that into a theatrical production either. All these people making a regular show out of their prayers, hoping for stardom! Do you think God sits in a box seat?"

"Here's what I want you to do: find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense His grace."

"The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They're full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. Don't fall for that nonsense. This is your Father you are dealing with, and He knows better than you what you need. With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply." (Matthew 6:5-8 The Message)

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. (Ephesians 6:10-18 NIV)

3 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NIV)

I. THE SPIRITUAL SITUATION - KINGDOMS IN CONFLICT:

- A. Kingdom of light, Kingdom of darkness.

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, (Colossians 1:13 NIV)

- B. Jesus saw His ministry as a conflict between two kingdoms.

But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you. (Luke 11:20 NIV)

- C. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. (1 John 3:8 NIV)

- D. There is a war going all the time. The 'bad' guys want to defeat the 'good' guys. It is serious, not a game. Soldiers and civilians can get hurt in war.

- E. We are soldiers in the army of God.

1. Soldiers don't go to battle without training and equipping. We need to be equipped and prepared ourselves.

Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2:3 NIV)

Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? (1 Corinthians 9:7 NIV)

2. We need to be aware of the plan and plot of the enemy. In planning war strategy it is key to know the ways and methods of the enemy, the expected place of attack, and the weapons that will be used. We should apply these same things to the battle that we are in.

3. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world; guns, knives, machetes or swords, fists, etc. but rather they are weapons that have divine power and demolish spiritual strongholds. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

II. KNOWING THE ENEMY.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6:12 NIV)

- A. Be self-controlled and alert, your enemy the devil

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8 NIV)

- B. Satan is not the same as God. He desired to be "Like the Most High", but has limitations.

1. He is powerful but not all powerful, not all knowing, not omnipresent.
2. Most people never have contact with Satan directly. There is enough original sin in them to sin without his direct influence.
3. People are much more likely to have contact with demons, Satan's emissaries.

- C. We are in conflict with authorities, powers, and spiritual forces.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6:12)

- D. These spiritual forces or emissaries of Satan operate in many ways:

1. Some may be territorial and influence the human leaders of nations or cities.

But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. (Daniel 10:13 NIV)

2. Some may deceive people through revelations to false teachers and prophets.

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. (1 Timothy 4:1)

3. Some may inhabit or possess individuals, keeping them in bondage and causing them to do bizarre or evil things.

When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. (Luke 8:27 NIV)

4. Some may tempt people in areas of weakness or in an unguarded moment and cause people to fall and become ineffective through moral failure.

..so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (1 Corinthians 7:5 NIV)

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. (1 Corinthians 10:13 NIV)

I was afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted you and our efforts might have been useless. (1 Thessalonians 3:5 NIV)

III. KNOWING THE BATTLEGROUND.

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV)

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6:12 NIV)

- A. The primary battleground in spiritual warfare is the mind. It is a battle for the control of people's minds and thought processes.
- B. Spiritual battles are fought "in the heavenly realm" and involve conflict between unseen forces.
- C. There is every indication that as believers pray, angels are dispatched to defeat Satan's forces, protect and support believers, and accomplish God's purposes.

Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation? (Hebrews 1:14 NIV)

IV. KNOWING THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT AND KNOWING THE ENEMY'S STRATEGIES.

in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes. (2 Corinthians 2:11 NIV)

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV)

Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. (Ephesians 6:11 NIV)

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6:12 NIV)

- Fear - Anxiety - Insecurity
- Doubt - Confusion - Deception
- Temptation - Sin - Bondage
- Strife - Envy - Jealousy
- Unforgiveness - Resentment - Bitterness
- Division - Over doctrine, class, age, race
- Accusation - Gossip - Condemnation
- Illness - Incapacitation - Premature Death
- Loss - Failure - Adverse Circumstances
- Demonic Possession - Oppression - Influence

V. KNOWING HOW TO PREPARE FOR BATTLE: PUTTING ON THE FULL ARMOUR OF GOD.

13 Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:13-17 NIV)

We are careful every day to clothe ourselves before facing the world, what about clothing our spiritual selves?

A. Belt of truth

1. The belt that holds our gear together; a place to hang our equipment.
2. Confident assurance that God's word is truth--a decision on our part. We know we can depend on His word because of who He is
3. The determination to be truthful and honest.

B. Breastplate of righteousness: Positional righteousness and functional righteousness.

1. Jesus is our righteousness--our right standing with God.
2. A breastplate is designed to protect the heart and other vital organs. Righteousness guards our hearts against the deceitfulness of the world and its ways.
3. As we confess Jesus as our righteousness, we put on the breastplate.

C. Feet fit with the readiness of the gospel of peace.

1. We have different shoes for different activities.
2. Prepared to go, to do, to grow, to mature.
3. To face the enemy with firm-footed stability.

D. Shield of Faith

1. The shield is our weapon of defense. Extinguishes, puts out the fiery darts of the enemy.
3. Our shield is the faithfulness of God
4. Made of fabric that would put out the fire
"fear not...."
"perfect love casts out fear"
"cast all your cares on Him.."
"not a man that He should lie..."

E. Helmet of salvation

1. The head is the nerve center, where decisions are made. We cover our mind with God's truths and ways.
2. What is our authority?

- We go in the Name and Authority of Jesus Christ.
- We speak what He speaks, we do what He does.

F. Sword of the Spirit

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12 NIV)

1. Offensive weapon--we fight with this.
2. Living and active; quick and sharp

VI. CAUTIONS FOR PRAYER WARRIORS.

A. Be very cautious about cursing or rebuking Satan and demons

8 In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings. 9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" 10 Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals--these are the very things that destroy them. (Jude 8-10 NIV)

10 This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings; 11 yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord. 12 But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish. (2 Peter 2:10-12 NIV)

B. Your authority in the spiritual realm is dependent on your relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord.

13 Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." 14 Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. 15 [One day] the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" 16 Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a

beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. (Acts 19:13-16 NIV)

- C. Your power in the spiritual realm is dependent on your relationship with the Holy Spirit and your obedience to His direction. You must be led by the Holy Spirit in identifying spiritual activity and dealing with it.
- D. Dealing with spiritual powers is always an act of faith. You must know what God's word says about your authority and how to exercise it to act in faith.
- E. Dealing with spiritual powers is Team Ministry. If no experienced believers are present and the situation must be dealt with immediately, ask the Holy Spirit for guidance and protection and proceed.
- F. Many people are held in bondages that are not specifically demonic. These can be habits, attitudes, and the result of wrong beliefs. Sometimes bondages are the result of curses. These bondages can be broken and the person can be set free in the name and authority of Jesus Christ.
- G. Discerning a spiritual situation does not necessarily mean you are to act on it immediately. You need to know what the problem is. You need to know what to do about it. You need to know how and when the Lord wants you to act: You must obey the Lord completely.

VII. GOING TO WAR - HOW WE ACTUALLY DO SPIRITUAL WARFARE.

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. (Ephesians 6:18 NIV)

- A. Use our authority to bind and loose.

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:19 NIV)

18 "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 18:18)

- B. Agree with God's revealed purposes. Declare that agreement. Agree with other believers.

19 "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." (Matthew 18:19-20 NIV)

- C. Submit ourselves to God's Authority.

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7 NIV)

1. Must be under authority to exercise authority.
2. Legitimate authority is given, illegitimate authority is taken (usurped).
3. Difference between authority and power.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (Matthew 28:18 NIV)

I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:49 NIV)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8 NIV)

When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, (Luke 9:1 NIV)

- D. Pray for things according to God's revealed will.

14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him. (1 John 5:14-15 NIV)

- E. Pray against the things you know to be wrong and contrary to God's will and purpose.

- F. Pray for those who are in authority, who make decisions and who influence those who make decisions.

1 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone-- 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. (1 Timothy 2:1-2 NIV)

Pray for:

1. Right values
2. Godly character
3. Wisdom