

SPIRITUAL WARFARE GUIDELINES

1. Purpose

- All Christians are engaged in the **spiritual war** between God and Satan whether they want to be or not
 - *“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be **able to stand against the wiles of the devil**. For **we do not wrestle against flesh and blood**, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against **spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places**.”* (Ephesians 6:12-13)
 - *“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.”* (2Corinthians 10:3-4)
- If we choose to **sit on the sidelines**, we are not out of the war – we just become **helpless, hopeless victims** of the devil
 - *“Be sober, be vigilant; because **your adversary the devil** walks about like a **roaring lion**, seeking whom **he may devour**.”* (1Peter 5:8)
 - *“... lest **Satan should take advantage of us**; for we are not ignorant of his devices.”* (2Cor. 2:11)
- God has **chosen His born-again believers to be His army** in this spiritual war that manifests in our natural world
 - *“And these signs will follow **those who believe**: In My name they will **cast out demons**; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸they will **take up serpents**; and if they drink anything deadly, it will **by no means hurt them**.”* (Mark 16:17-18)
 - *“... on this rock I will **build My church**, and the **gates of Hades shall not prevail against it**.”* (Matthew 16:18)
- We are the **soldiers** in the war but it is not **our war**, it is the **Lord’s war**
 - *“... for the **battle is the LORD’s**, and He will give you into our hands.”* (1Samuel 17:47)
- The **ultimate purpose** of the war is to **win souls for the Kingdom**
 - *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, **not willing that any should perish** but that all should come to repentance.”* (2Peter 3:9)
- From **God’s perspective** outside our world of space and time, **the war is already over**:
 - *“In the world you will have **tribulation**; but be of good cheer, **I have overcome the world**.”* (John 16:33)
 - *“And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. ²⁰**Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet** who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. **These two were cast alive into the lake of fire** burning with brimstone. ²¹**And the rest were killed with the sword** which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse.”* (Revelation 19:19-21)
 - *¹Then I saw an **angel** coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ²**He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years**; ³**and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more**”* (Revelation 20:1-3)

2. Be Offensive, Not Defensive

- The Lord does not want us to **just stand** in our **armor of God**, but rather to **take up the sword of the Spirit** and **attack** the enemy
 - “... and **the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**; ¹⁸*praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.*” (Ephesians 6:17-18)
- While we “**stand**” firm in the **natural**, we **war in the spiritual** through “**all prayer and supplication**” – for that is what **spiritual warfare is all about – prayer!**
 - That’s because the **war is not won in our strength**, but rather **by the Lord’s power and might** – we are just the **vessel and vehicle** through which He works
 - *‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the LORD of hosts.*
- Nor can we be **lone rangers** in the war – it must be done **through the Church** (i.e. the **real Church**, the **Body of Christ** as it was **first practiced** in the book of Acts
 - “... on this rock I will **build My church**, and the **gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.**” (Matthew 16:18)
- If we **work together** as part of the **Body of Christ**, then we can accomplish **great things**
 - “*The people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.*” (Daniel 11:32b)
 - “*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. ¹³And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.*” (John 14:12-14)
- Jesus did not come just to give us **eternal life** – but also to **destroy the works of the devil through us!**
 - “*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*” (1John 3:8)
- The **Lord Jesus** also came so that we might have **abundant life** here on earth – **right here, right now!**
 - “¹⁰*The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*” (John 10:10)
- We must **persevere** in our **warfare** with **great determination**, not stopping **short of complete victory**
 - *Elisha had become sick with the illness of which he would die. Then Joash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over his face, and said, “O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!” ¹⁵And Elisha said to him, “Take a bow and some arrows.” So he took himself a bow and some arrows. ¹⁶Then he said to the king of Israel, “Put your hand on the bow.” So he put his hand on it, and Elisha put his hands on the king’s hands. ¹⁷And he said, “Open the east window”; and he opened it. Then Elisha said, “Shoot”; and he shot. And he said, “The arrow of the LORD’S deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for you must strike the Syrians at Aphek till you have destroyed them.” ¹⁸Then he said, “Take the arrows”; so he took them. And he said to the king of Israel, “Strike the ground”; so he struck three times, and stopped. ¹⁹And the man of God was angry with him, and said, “You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck Syria till you had destroyed it! But now you will strike Syria only three times.”* (2Kings 13:14-19)

3. Timing & Location Determined by the Holy Spirit

- In warfare, the **troops** do not **do anything** unless and until they are **ordered to do so** by the **commanding officer**
 - Even **Jesus** was **subject** to a **higher authority** and didn't **do or say anything** until **His Father told Him to do so**
 - *"⁴⁹For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. ⁵⁰And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."* (John 12:49-25)
- So too did **Paul** allow his **footsteps** to be **ordered by the Lord**
 - *"⁶Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were **forbidden by the Holy Spirit** to preach the word in Asia. ⁷After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the **Spirit did not permit them**. ⁸So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. ⁹And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' ¹⁰Now **after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.**"* (Acts 16:6-10)
 - *"The **steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD**, and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; **For the LORD upholds him with His hand.**"* (Psalms 37:23-24)
- We are **unable to see the Big Picture** – but God **exists outside of time and space** and can see the **beginning from the end**
 - *"⁸I am the Alpha and the Omega, the **Beginning and the End**," says the Lord, "**who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.**"* (Revelation 1:8)
 - *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are **My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.**"* (Isaiah 55:9)
- We must **always remember** that **the Lord has a plan** – and has had it **from before the beginning of time!**
 - *"⁸All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the **Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**"* (Revelation 13:8)
- We have to **avoid acting** according to our **own plans** even when they **seem so right!**
 - *"There is a way that seems **right to a man**, but its end is the **way of death.**"* (Proverbs 14:12)
 - *"The **LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.** The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations." (Psalm 33:10-11)*
 - *"A **man's heart plans his way** (i.e. a burden or calling from the Lord), **but the LORD directs his steps.**"* (Proverbs 16:9)
- **Waiting on the Lord** is the **key to success**
 - *"**Wait on the LORD, and keep His way, and He shall exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you shall see it.**"* (Psalm 37:4)
 - *"**But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.**"* (Isaiah 40:31)