

# Spiritual Warfare: The Fact of Spiritual Warfare

**Introduction:** Over the next several weeks in Adult Sunday School, we will invest a little bit of time studying the biblical topic of spiritual warfare.

This topic will cover our time between now and the time that we, with the Lord's help, will start in our study of the book of John.

## **What We Are Not Teaching**

We are not in agreement or dealing with what is termed exorcism (The expulsion of evil spirits from persons or places by certain adjurations and ceremonies.<sup>1</sup>) or specific demonic encounters.

We are not in agreement with the so-called practices of "binding" demons or even entertaining break-through prayer sessions for evangelistic purposes or 'territorial spiritual warfare.'

## **What We Are Teaching**

We are dealing with what the Bible describes for us as the battle that individual Christians encounter against the three enemies of this life. Those three enemies are **the World** (by that I mean the corrupt world's systems under the influence and control of the Prince of the power of the air), **the flesh** (our old man- carnal nature), and **the Devil** (and connectively his workers).

The problems with a non-biblical sensationalistic derived focus on so-called "spiritual warfare" are many. (Let me caution you to be concerned with the Bible, not popularized extra-biblical practices.)

## **The Problems with the "Spiritual Warfare Movements":**

- They are devoid of a biblical foundation or commands. (The practice of binding demons or Satan is nowhere to be found in the Bible. The Bible tells us to "resist the devil" not bind him. If any "binding" is to take place, it would be our God, the Lord Jesus Christ who said He had bound the "strong man.")
- They teach unbiblical prayer practices. (We are not commanded in the Bible to address Satan or demons ever.)
- They have an unbiblical emphasis on Satan and the activities of demons while denying man's spiritual depravity and sinfulness. It supposes that everything is because "the devil made me do it."

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<sup>1</sup> Webster's 1828 Dictionary

Just as Pentecostalism and Charismatic heretical teaching had in times past discouraged biblical Christians from teaching about the third person of the Trinity, God the Holy Spirit, these ‘spiritual warfare’ movements and unbiblical views have discouraged us from speaking about the reality of our warfare as Christians.

**Our goal is to be taught by the Lord through His Word the biblical view concerning our warfare in this present life.**

Today will be looking at “The Fact of Spiritual Warfare.”

### Lessons in this series:

- The Fight of Spiritual Warfare
- The Fallacies of Spiritual Warfare
- The Furnishings for Spiritual Warfare
- The Forging from Spiritual Warfare
- The Fallen from Spiritual Warfare
- The Frontier of Spiritual Warfare



### Text Verse: II Corinthians 10:3-5

*“3 For though we walk in the flesh, **we do not war after the flesh:** 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;”*

The term ‘spiritual warfare’ is not found in the Bible. The following terms can be found individually but not together:

‘Warfare’ - I Corinthians 9:7; II Corinthians 10:4; I Timothy 1:18

Spiritual - Romans 1:11, 7:14, 15:27; I Corinthians 2:13, 15, 3:1, 9:11, 10:3-4, 12:1, 14:1, 12, 37, 15:44,46; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 1:3, 5:19, 6:12; Colossians 1:9, 3:16; I Peter 2:5

The topic, however as we will discover, is found in the Scriptures.

Paul in this passage says, “*we **do not war after the flesh...***”

What exactly is Paul saying here with this statement?

In that letter (I Corinthians), Paul dealt with some major issues that were detrimental to that local church.

- They had problems with division from within. (**I Corinthians 1:10**)
- They had issues with sexual immorality. The church had not dealt with the offenders among the brethren. (**I Corinthians 5:1**)
- They had issues discerning the propriety (Fitness; suitability; appropriateness; consonance with established principles, rules, or customs; justness; accuracy) of marriage. (**I Corinthians 7:1**)
- They had issues concerning food offered to idols and exercising liberty versus causing a stumbling block. (**I Corinthians 8:4,9**)
- They had issues with murmuring and criticism. (**I Corinthians 10:10**)
- They had issues with idolatry. (**I Corinthians 10:14-22**)
- They had issues with authority and appearance. (**I Corinthians 11:1-15**)
- They had issues with abusing the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. (**I Corinthians 11:16-34**)
- They had issues with the exercise of Spiritual Gifts. (**I Corinthians 12-14**)
- They had doctrinal issues concerning the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. (**I Corinthians 15:12**)

Paul's tone in **II Corinthians** is more consolatory and he explains his ministry for the Lord Jesus Christ. In our text, Paul is responding to some who had been saying that he is just walking "*according to the flesh...*" (**verse 2**)

**II Corinthians 10:2** *"2 But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh."*

Paul's response is this, *"3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh."*

Paul is saying, Yes, we live, move, and breathe in these physical bodies, but *"we do not war after the flesh..."*

Paul introduces the subject of spiritual warfare through the language he uses.

**A Biblical Example:**

**Read II Kings chapter 6:8-17**

You might be thinking... how unusual! And truly this matter that you and I deal with to the lost world is foolishness.

But we come to understand that there is a world that is operating before us in plain sight. A physical world with which we are familiar.

But there is also a spiritual world that we cannot see that is just as real. The events of this world that are in view and the events of the world we cannot see (those things that are spiritual) are connected.

One of the key passages concerning spiritual warfare that we will deal with extensively is found in the book of Ephesians.

### The City of Ephesus

One of the distinguishing marks of Ephesus was that it was known for the massive Temple to Diana the Roman goddess. This Temple was 425 feet in length, and 220 feet in width. It was encompassed by 127 pillars. Each pillar was 60 feet in height according to the Roman historian Pliny the Elder.

Demetrius, the silversmith who rallied the enemies of the cross in **Acts chapter 19** said this concerning Paul and his labor for the Lord.



*Ephesus*

*“So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.”*

It was this commerce that was threatened by Paul’s preaching and the subsequent salvation of so many in that city after several years of work. He tells them in **Ephesians chapter 6:12**, that they are in a war. The warfare they are fighting is not the kind of battle that this world recognizes.

Paul states, *“For we wrestle **not against flesh and blood**, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”*

This passage again is not intended to dismiss the physical world. It is not teaching that people aren't involved in this warfare, but rather at the root of all that is taking place in this world is not what is immediately evident to our fleshly eyes. Behind all that takes place in this world is a spiritual war that is going on.

This war is against God, it is against His angels and His Saints and is driven by Satan and His fellow workers; those who are without Christ and unwittingly involved.

**Turn back again to II Corinthians chapter 10.**

*“For though **we** walk in the flesh, **we** do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of **our** warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)”*

Paul uses in the passage the personal pronoun “we.” Paul includes all the Christians there at Corinth.

**Additional Notes:**

**Who is the war between?**

The Bible describes for us our entrance into this war in **Genesis chapter 3.**

When we come to the book of Genesis we are dealing with a book of beginnings. Genesis declares to us God's sovereignty and great power and goodness. In Genesis chapter 3 we read of the fall of man. We discover that the woman, whom God made from Adam, was deceived by the serpent and she and Adam sinned. They disobeyed God. In doing so, “dying they died...” just as God had told them. Spiritually they were separated from God and physically their bodies began the process of dying. Their nature was now corrupted.

Notice what God reveals in verse 15:

*“15 **And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.**”*

There is the seed which is of the serpent. There is the seed which is of the woman.

As the book of Genesis continues you will see distinctly a following of those 2 lines of folks until the worldwide flood.

**John 8:44** *“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”*

**Colossians 1:12-14** *“12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath **delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:** 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:”*

We entered into this war in **Genesis chapter 3**. This war has been taking place ever since.

I would like for you to notice further concerning the fact of spiritual warfare, that our success lies in God’s might and His power and not our own. **Turn back once again to II Corinthians chapter 10.**

The Bible says, *“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, **but mighty through God** to the pulling down of strong holds;”*

This is a foundational truth concerning spiritual warfare and the fight we face.

How do we apply this first lesson, “The Fact of Spiritual Warfare”?

1. Be reminded that this life is not just a bunch of temporal physical circumstances. We are in the war between seeds.
2. This warfare that we wage is for the souls of men and the glory of God. It is of supreme importance and very serious.
3. Ultimately, there are only two sides to this war. There are the children of the Devil and the children of God the Father.
4. The warfare for each Christian is against three main enemies: “the world” “the flesh” and “the Devil.” (**I John 2:16; Revelation 12:7, 17, 17:14**)
5. We have weapons and armor, but they are spiritual and they are mighty through God.
6. One day the warfare will be over.