

DRAWING THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE LINES

Selected Scriptures

When it comes to “*Winning the War Within*” one of the fundamental issues that needs to be understood is **where the spiritual battles lines are drawn**. Where is the battle field? What is being fought for? How does the enemy of our souls, Satan, wage war? How are we to wage war? What is our armor and what are our weapons? What is being fought for? If you are going to win the battle you need to know where to draw the spiritual battle lines in your life. In this study we will look at the Scriptures and try to answer some of these foundational questions.

I. DEFINING THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE LINES:

A. Your Enemies

One of the fundamental issues when fighting any battle is knowing who your enemy is. It is impossible to win a battle if you don't know who you are fighting against. Your enemies are summed up in four general categories:

1. Satan

Satan is the captain of the forces of wickedness fighting against you. The Scriptures describe him as a lion, you are his prey, and he wants to devour you with sin and deception. Satan is a fallen angel who is hell bent on stealing glory from God. Satan knows that he is too weak to attack God directly, so he attacks God indirectly by attacking men created in God's image. He steals glory from God by keeping men from giving glory to God. He leads men, who are created to give glory to God, into sin and rebellion. Satan does this by tempting men to sin and by deceiving them into believing what is false.

a) II Cor. 11:3, 14-15

b) I Pet. 5:8-9

c) I Jn. 5:19

2. Demons

Demons, like Satan, are holy angels that have rebelled against God. The ruler of the demons is Satan (Mt. 25:41; Rev. 12:3-4). Satan leads the demons in rebellion against God by attacking men created in the image of God. Satan can only be in one place at a time but he has many demons, also called evil spirits, who do his bidding.

a) I Cor. 10:14, 19-21

b) I Tim. 4:1

3. Men

Because all unbelievers are of their father the devil and walk according to their own lusts, Satan uses them to his own wicked ends. Men are Satan's pawns to spread false doctrine, deceive believers, and entice and seduce others to sin. Even believers can be deceived by Satan and be used by him to deceive other believers. Therefore it is critical that we are always on guard against being deceived and being led into sin by men walking in rebellion against God.

a) II Cor. 4:3-4

b) II Cor. 11:13-15

c) Eph. 2:1-3

4. Yourself

You would not think of yourself as an enemy, but men, because of their sinful passions, often plunge themselves into ruin in order to gratify their flesh. All men, saved and unsaved, are sin cursed and have to battle their own flesh and sinful desires to keep from sinning. The Puritans described it as "mortifying the flesh" or killing the sinful passions that wage war within us. Though we may strike many blows against our sinful natures in this life, our sinful passions are like a dragon that cannot be killed by anything but our physical death. As long as we live as mortals in this world we will have to battle the sinful desires within us. You are often your worst enemy.

a) John 3:19-21

b) Rom. 7:14-18

c) James 1:14-16

B. The Battle Lines

As mentioned above, you are often your worst enemy. You can be tempted from without by Satan, demons, and evil men. They can entice you to sin, but they cannot make you sin. But even if Satan and the demons were destroyed, and you were on a desert island all by yourself, you would still sin. Why? Because sin dwells within you. You were conceived in sin, born a sinner, and sin because you are a sinner (see Gen. 8:21; Psa. 51:5; 58:3; Rom. 5:12). When you repented of your sins and placed your faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, you are saved from the eternal consequences of sin, slavery to sin, and slavery to Satan. Yet, your flesh, your mortal bodies with their sinful passions are not saved or transformed in this life. Our sinful passions remain in our bodies. This is your battle field. You have the Spirit indwelling you urging you to obey and follow God and you have the flesh crying out to be satisfied. The enemies of your soul wage war against you by appealing to your flesh. Below are listed some of the Scriptures which define for us the battle lines.

1. Flesh

The word “flesh” in the Bible is sometimes used in a general way to describe our “physical being.” For instance Paul described his mortal life in a physical body as “**the life I live in the flesh**” (Gal. 2:20). He was not talking about his sinful passions but his physical being. Yet, most of the time the word “flesh” is used to describe the sinful passions within us. Our bodies are sin cursed and when we are saved, they are not transformed by God’s grace at that time. Our bodies have to die, and then at the rapture they are transformed and glorified. Until that time, while we live in the flesh, we must constantly fight the sinful desires and passions within us that cry out to be gratified.

a) Rom. 7:5, 14, 22-25

b) Rom. 8:3-4, 13, 23

c) Eph. 2:1-3

2. Mind

In the Scriptures there is a premium placed on guarding our minds and using our minds for the glory of God. We are called to love the Lord with all of our heart, soul, and *mind* (Mt. 22:37). We are instructed to be transformed by the renewing of our *mind* (Rom. 12:1-2). We are told to set our *minds* on the things above (Col. 3:2). Satan knows that our minds are the control center of our life and that our minds govern our actions. This is why Satan is out to capture your mind by corrupting it with error.

- a) Rom. 8:5-9
- b) II Cor. 11:3
- c) Eph. 4:17-19
- d) James 4:1-4

3. Truth vs. Error

The Scriptures make it clear that the treasure that Satan is trying to steal from people is the truth. God is seeking worshipers who worship in spirit and *truth* (Jn. 4:23-24). *Truth* is what sets us free from sin and its consequences (Jn. 8:32). Jesus is the *truth* (Jn. 14:6). The Holy Spirit is the spirit of *truth* (Jn. 14:17; 16:13). We are sanctified by the *truth* (Jn. 17:17). The Bible is the word of *truth* (Jn. 17:17; II Cor. 6:7). When we have the truth we have everything we need to resist the devil and live for the glory of God. It is Satan's goal, therefore, to deceive people, and substitute lies for the truth.

- a) Jn. 8:44-45
- b) Rom. 1:24-25
- c) Eph. 5:6
- d) II Tim. 2:16-18, 24-26
- e) II Tim. 3:8
- f) II Tim. 4:3-4
- g) II Pet. 2:1-3
- h) I Jn. 2:21-22, 26

II. KNOWING THE CHINKS IN YOUR ARMOR:

Not only is it important to know your enemy and know where the Battle lines are drawn, it is also important to know your weaknesses. Like the fabled dragon Smag, in J. R. Tolkien's classic *The Hobbit*, who had a small vulnerable place where the arrow of Bard the archer penetrated and entered into his heart, so all of us have weaknesses, chinks in our armor, unguarded back doors to our hearts where Satan is sure to shoot his fiery darts. All men are sinners and all men are guilty of all kinds of sins, but everyone has certain sins that are their favorite sins, beloved sins, sins that they nourish and feed like pets in the caverns of their hearts. These beloved sins are cracks in the foundations of our lives. They are like slow leaks in the face of a large dam and if they are not stopped up sin will gush forth upon us like a flood. No matter what your beloved sin is it can be placed into one of three categories. These three categories are mentioned in I Jn. 2:16-17. The text reads:

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

A. Three General Categories of Sin:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

B. Where they do not come from –

C. Where they do come from –

D. What their end will be –

E. What God's will is for us –

III. PROTECTING THE FORTRESS OF YOUR HEART, MIND, AND SOUL:

The topic of protecting the fortress of your heart, mind, and soul will be dealt with at length in lessons to follow. Here, our purpose is to introduce you to the basics of protecting your heart, mind, and soul. While many things can be said about protecting the fortress of your heart, mind, and soul, there are two disciplines we must learn in boot camp in order to win the war from within. First, we must learn to guard our hearts, and second we must learn to listen to our conscience.

A. Stand Guard Over Your Heart with All Diligence

Proverbs 4:23 instructs us saying, ***Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.*** This simple verse provides us with a plan for protecting the command center of our life.

1. **Your command**
2. **The reason for the command**
 - a) Your heart is a treasure
 - b) Your heart is a traitor
3. **Your effort**
4. **Your motivation**
5. **Your method**
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
 - e)

B. Listen to Your Conscience

Most houses have smoke alarms. Smoke alarms are designed to notify the owners when there is a fire. In a similar way, God has given everyone an internal smoke alarm. It is called the conscience. When working correctly your conscience will warn you not only when you are sinning, but also when you are in a situation where you might be tempted to sin. The Scriptures mention ten different kinds of consciences that might be categorized into three different groups i.e., the good, the bad, and the ugly. Let's look at some general verses which describe what the conscience does for us and then look at the eleven different kinds of consciences grouped in three different categories.

1. The Function of the Conscience

- a) Acts 23:1
- b) Rom. 2:15
- c) Rom. 9:1
- d) I Cor. 10:23-29
- e) I Pet. 2:19

2. Good consciences

- a) Blameless conscience – Acts 14:16
- b) Honest conscience – II Cor. 1:12
- c) Clear conscience – II Tim. 1:3
- d) Perfect conscience – Heb. 9:9-14
- e) Cleansed conscience – Heb. 9:14
- f) Good conscience – I Tim. 1:5, 19

3. **Bad consciences**

- a) Weak conscience I Cor. 8:9-13
- b) Wounded conscience I Cor. 8:12
- c) Defiled conscience – I Cor. 8:7 (believers), Tit. 1:15 (unbelievers)

4. **Ugly consciences**

- a) Evil conscience Heb. 10:19-22
- b) Seared conscience – I Tim. 4:1-2

The Scriptures have much to say about the conscience. It is a very important instrument that God has placed in our hearts to protect us from sin and temptation. We keep our consciences working properly by 1) constantly adjusting them with the Word of God, 2) listening to them when they go off, 3) not pulling out the batteries when they go off, and 4) not damaging them by putting them in the fires of sin and temptation.

IV. **DIVINELY POWERED WEAPONS FOR OUR WARFARE:**

A. **Armor of God - Eph. 6:10-17**

God has not abandoned believers to their own resources but has given them spiritual weapons for waging spiritual warfare. There is much false and distorted teaching about spiritual warfare today. Many seem to think they are not engaged in spiritual warfare unless they are trying to do demon exorcism (something we are never instructed to do in any of the letters to the churches). The Scriptures teach that as Christians we are always in a battle. Ephesians 6:12 says, ***“our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”*** The text does not say we are going to be in a battle, or we might be in a battle, but that there is a constant battle and we are in it. The questions we must ask are “Have I put on the armor of God?” and “Am I fighting?” As a Christian, every time you are obeying God, you are fighting against Satan. Thus spiritual warfare is not as many would define it today i.e., casting out demons, removing curses, or binding Satan, but it is: ***Anything a Christian does in the power of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God.”*** God gives us weapons to fight the battle and they are listed below starting with the armor of God.

1. Truth vs. 14 (also Jn. 4:23-24; 17:17-19; II Cor. 4:2; Eph. 4:15, 25; 5:9)
2. Righteousness vs. 14 (also Mt. 5:48; Lk. 1:74-75; Rom. 6:13, 16, 18)
3. Gospel vs. 15 (also I Cor. 15:1-4; Phil. 1:27; Col. 1:23)
4. Faith vs. 16 (also Gal. 1:17; Heb. 11:6; I Jn. 5:4-5)
5. Salvation vs. 17 (also Phil. 2:12; I Thess. 5:8; II Thess. 2:13; I Pet. 2:2)
6. Word of God vs. 17 (also Jn. 14:15, 23; I Cor. 7:19; Heb. 4:12; I Pet. 1:22-25; II Pet. 2:19)

B. Prayer

Prayer is not a weapon, or a piece of armor, but it is a resource whereby we can call for help, strength, and reinforcements. Prayer is a direct line into the King of king's office. Prayer is an act of submission and trust in God and whenever we are submitting to and trusting in God, we are in a position to be overwhelming conquerors. By prayer we ask God to help us with battles that we cannot win on our own.

1. Luke 22:40, 46
2. Eph. 6:18-20
3. Heb. 4:14

C. The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit abides in every believer. Yet, the Holy Spirit does not force the believer to obey. The Holy Spirit encourages, helps, and motivates the believer to obey and use God's resources that He has provided to win the war within, but we must choose to submit to the Holy Spirit's leading in our life. We must obey the command to walk by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a divine power source within every believer, but each believer must choose to tap in to the Holy Spirit's power in order to win the war within.

1. Rom. 8:12-14

2. Gal. 5:16-25

3. Jude 20-21

D. Truth of God

1. Lk. 4:1-13 (esp. vss. 7, 10, 11)

2. Eph. 6:17

3. Heb. 4:12

V. SUMMARY

A. Your enemies are Satan, demons, evil men, and self

B. Your battle lines are your flesh, your mind, and the truth

C. You protect your heart, mind and soul by guarding your heart and listening to your conscience

D. You are to fight with spiritual weapons which would include the armor of God, prayer, the Holy Spirit, and the truth