

Guidelines for spiritual warfare

Principle 1: The most important truth the believer must know and apply is the position of authority or the Throne position. Ignorance in this respect renders the believer spiritually powerless. The Christian should know who he is in Christ and that he has authority over all evil forces in Christ.

Principle 2: The Christian must know about the key power God gave us and he must know how to use it every day and in each situation where necessary. We must bind the works of Satan from our position of authority as well as release those bound by Satan in Jesus' Name.

Principle 3: We must not fear the devil and his demons. We must resist (Jas.4:7) and rebuke him if necessary. Don't pay unnecessary attention to the forces of evil, but if we see them at work we must resist and rebuke them.

Principle 4: We must put on the full armour of God so that we may remain upright against the attacks of the Evil One (Eph.6:10-18). Every part of this armour is important. We cannot remain upright without it.

Principle 5: We must know our enemy, we must know who he is, what he can do, how he works and when he works. The real enemy is often not identified and can therefore not be opposed or dealt with effectively.

Principle 6: The cross of Jesus is at the centre of the whole struggle against the Evil One, because he was conquered at the cross. So too, we Christians have to die to self and be crucified in order to remain standing against the cunning attacks of the Evil One.

Principle 7: We must know the Word of God. Mt.22:29 says that we are deceived because we do not know Scripture, neither do we know the power of God. Many Christians remain spiritually ineffective and do not share in the victorious life because they do not know the Word of God. It means that they do not know the truth, and the devil is able to mislead them very easily.

Principle 8: Test the weapons in battle. We do not always need the same weapons when in combat with the Evil One. We sometimes need Eph.6:13-17, sometimes Re.12:11, sometimes the blood of Jesus Christ, then again Jn.15 and at other times Rm:6 or Rm.8:37. We need different "weapons" depending on the situation. It is often not enough to just bind and resist Satan. Because unconfessed sin might exist, it can be an attack on our old nature, it can be lies concerning our relationship with Jesus. Therefore we need different weapons, different Scripture passages or Scriptural principles for different situations.

Principle 9: Someone said that spiritual warfare is waiting on the Lord 97% of the time. It is difficult to wait upon the Lord for those who need to see things happen. Undue haste is often the beginning of spiritual defeat and failure.

Principle 10: It is God's battle. As a Christian you are a comrade in arms, but remember it is God's battle. God decides where, against whom and when the fight should take place. In the end it is God and His Angels who fight. We fight with God - God does not fight with us. He knows what He is doing, therefore we must trust Him and not prescribe what He should do.

Principle 11: Use the blood of Jesus in the struggle against the Evil One. The blood must be used for cleansing, reconciliation, protection and justification. The Bible states clearly that Satan must be conquered by the blood of the Lamb (Re.12:11).

Principle 12: Keep a pure heart. Without a pure heart the believer is rendered ineffective in his battle against Satan. Be sure that all conscious unconfessed sin is confessed and that you make restitution for your past as far as possible. Satan has no hold on a child of God with a pure heart.

Principle 13: Put all things to the test. Scripture clearly states that we should test all things, especially supernatural events. Test the fruits. 1 Jn.4:1 says that we must put all spirits to the test.

Principle 14: The will of God is of utmost importance in spiritual warfare. It is only when we walk in the will of God that we can really depend on His protection. It is not important what you think should happen but what God's will and plan is. God grants no protection to our own plans. I can choose with my will whether I want to serve God or not, if I am going to obey Him or not. God can use me as fellow worker in His Kingdom to the extent of my choosing to do His will.

Principle 15: Proclaim the victory in Christ. We already have the victory in Christ; we don't have to still gain the victory. We are more than conquerors in Christ. Satan will do everything in his power to blind you to this truth. Proclaim the victory and don't try to gain the victory.

Principle 16: Obedience to God is indispensable if you want to live in victory and remain standing in the struggle against the Evil One. Nothing can replace obedience - neither sacrifice nor good works, nor anything else for that matter. Jesus is the Author and the Finisher of our faith. He must be followed without protest, rebellion, unbelief or doubt. In a certain sense the Biblical message can be seen as God instructing man to obey His will.

Principle 17: We must protect our mind/reasoning. Next to man's emotions, the Evil One concentrates especially on man's mind. Therefore the Christian must protect his mind. The devil comes to us with all kinds of reasoning and plans. Basically thoughts have three places of origin:

- a) from man himself;
- b) from Satan;
- c) from God.

2 Cor.10:5-6 says that we must take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ. We must resist every thought that is not from God. We must pray for discernment and also keep our mind under the blood of Jesus.

Principle 18: We must act offensively and not defensively. We must take the offensive and take the strong man's possessions from him so that they can come under the command of the Kingdom of God. One of the most important principles in spiritual warfare is not to defend all the time but to take the offensive, to take the initiative and to dictate the battle. No battle is won with a defensive attitude.

Principle 19: Angels play an important role in the struggle against the Evil One. Our attention can constantly be drawn to the actions of Angels (2 Ki.6:16-17; Heb.1:14; Dn.6:22; Ac.12:8-11; Ps.91:11-12). We must know that there are Angeles who help us and that we can also pray that the Father would send His Angeles to protect and save us. However, we may never pray to the Angels themselves. Neither must we try to make contact with them.

Principle 20: Ask fellow believers to join you in the struggle against the Evil One. Join a prayer group or build a prayer group that can apply spiritual warfare with you. There is greater strength in communal prayer. It is also a good thing to have brothers and sisters who

can join hands with you when you become discouraged and tired, especially when the struggle is heavy and the resistance is great.

Principle 21: The concentration of powers is a very important principle in warfare. We must concentrate our powers and focus our attacks on the most strategic areas. Ask God to point out strategic people and strongholds through the Holy Spirit and concentrate your spiritual onslaught there. Ask other believers (individual intercessors and prayer groups) to join you and to concentrate spiritual warfare on those specific areas that are the most important in the spiritual realm. A great deal of the power of spiritual leaders lies in faithful co-workers - fellow-fighters.

Principle 22: It is of utmost importance that we do not relax after a victory has been won in the spiritual realm. No, we must persevere, or rather, apply the principle of pursuit. We tend to relax the moment a breakthrough has been made for Christ. This is always dangerous, because this is the time when a counter-attack by the enemy is normally very effective. We must pursue the enemy (the Evil One) until all resistance is wiped out and a complete victory is gained. This principle is illustrated very well in Gideon's battle against the Midianites (Jdg.7 and 8).

Principle 23: The next principle is that of communication. Many battles in history were lost because the communication between the general in command and the troops in the field broke down. The Christian must be in contact with his supreme Commander (Commander-in-Chief), Jesus Christ. The slightest sin or act of disobedience inhibits this communication between God and man. If we cannot hear what God says, we don't know what His will is and so we cannot act effectively. Confession of sin is the only way in which this communication can be restored.

Principle 24: Another principle in spiritual warfare is co-operation. Satan will do anything in his power to cause separation and strife between Christians. Howard Guinness says the following in his book *Total Christian War*, "Fellowship is the key to this faith; such deep fellowship with God through Christ that it unavoidably leads to sincere togetherness with His other children. Revival in the Christian church will undoubtedly only come when committed Christians associate with each other in a disciplined creative way. Such a unity of believers in Christ is God's strongest weapon in evangelising the world (1 Jn.1:5-7; Jn.17:22-23). The isolated Christian is vulnerable."

Principle 25: Without personal safety and protection we cannot become involved in spiritual warfare. Clausewitz said: "The art of entrenchment...shall serve the defender not to defend himself more securely behind a rampart, but to attack the enemy more successfully." This is a great truth which you must not underestimate. Paul means what he says in Eph.6:10: we must be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power so that we can stand against the devil's schemes. Among other things, this verse means that we must clothe ourselves with the Lord. We are safe in Him. The Christian must use his armour and weapons to put himself out of the reach of the enemy.

Principle 26: Somebody said: "If you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time." Spiritually this is also true. We must know where we are going, we must have a goal. We must know where the enemy is in this spiritual war, where his strongholds are and which of those strongholds we want to pull down in Jesus' Name. We must work spiritually, systematically and purposefully. For instance, if we pray for a saved person, we must determine which strongholds of the Evil One there are in his life and which of those

strongholds are predominant. Then we will know how to pray.

Principle 27: Praise is indispensable in spiritual warfare. One becomes discouraged without praise, and the Evil One and his activities become such an overwhelming reality that we forget about God. Praise drives the enemy away, it drives away doubt, fear and an excessive awareness of the Evil One. We must keep our eyes upon Jesus and praise and glorify Him, we must exalt God. Praise frees the spirit and brings us into contact with the greatness and majesty of God.

Principle 28: In warfare a time for planned withdrawal always exists. This does not mean that you take to your heels. One retreats from the fight with good reason. It is necessary that the believer withdraws himself from time to time to rest, to take a holiday, have fellowship with the Lord (quiet time, times of prayer or fasting and prayer), or to take time to recover in body and spirit in order to go to battle afresh. Exhaustion and tiredness cause man to be abnormally vulnerable to Satan's temptations and onslaughts. He who ignores the rule of planned withdrawal, tries to be super-human and is a fool (Mk.6:31, 46; Lk.5:16; Lk.6:12; Is.4:31).

Principle 29: The Holy Spirit, His power, filling, gifts, fruits, sealing, guidance, conviction of sin, interpretation of Scripture and interceding with the Father with unspoken moaning, is indispensable in spiritual warfare. Without the power, guidance and co-operation of the Holy Spirit the believer is powerless against the Evil One.

Principle 30: Prayer certainly is one of the most important pillars in spiritual warfare. By this we mean prayer in all its forms: adoration, exaltation, thanksgiving, confession, intercession and warfare (to destroy the strongholds of the Evil One from your position of authority).