

## **Spiritual Warfare**

*Agents of Good and Agents of Evil - A Catalyst Study led by Dr. Jeremy Couture*

### **Introduction**

- There are A LOT of resources available about spiritual warfare, but unfortunately many of them don't seem very Biblical. (Why are there so many?)
  - People are looking for answers to why things are the way they are. (Conflict, disfunction, addictions, abuse, etc.)
  - We live in a culture that values self-actualization (Be all that you can be)
  - The Charismatic Movement that started in the 1960's brought the spiritual world into focus for the Church.
- In addition, we live in a spiritual world (like we talk about in Session 1), so we have a natural desire to learn about that part of our nature.
- In this session, we are going to focus on the comic struggle that is happening all around us. We will focus on what it is and how we be victorious as followers of Jesus Christ.
- The timeline for this struggle is established in Scripture.
  - One of the consequences of Adam and Eve's in, Genesis 3:15, is perpetual enmity (That's Hebrew for "fightn") between Adam's line and the line of Satan.
  - In the end, Satan his minions will be defeated and thrown into the lake of fire forever and ever (Revelation 20:7-10)

### **I. Seven Approaches to Spiritual Warfare (all approaches are not the same, even one's that claim the Bible)**

#### **A. The Domination Approach (Walter Wink)**

1. Satan is a symbol for humanity's struggle with evil, not an actual spiritual being.
2. People oppose him by praying for protection over the institutions of society that veer off into selfishness.

#### **B. The Classical Approach (David Powlison)**

1. Spiritual warfare the normal Christian experience with right and wrong.
2. Victory is achieved by "living as light in a dark world."

#### **C. The Ground-Level Approach (Greg Boyd)**

1. The conflicts in the spiritual world are all matched by the earthly conflicts that surround us.
2. The way to win is to live a "revolting" or a counter cultural lifestyle.

#### **D. The Strategic-Level Approach (C. Peter Wagner)**

1. Satan assigns the high-ranking member of his forces to control nations, regions, cities, tribes, people groups, neighborhoods, and other significant social networks.
2. There are a number of weapons that can be used against these territorial spirits including: spiritual mapping, prophetic decrees, power encounters, prayer walking.

#### **E. The Embodied Warrior Approach (Timothy G. Gombis)**

1. Based on Isaiah 59:15-19, the church is now the “divine warrior” and engages with the evil powers of this present age.
  2. The church succeeds in its mission by undergoing constant “community” transformation.
- F. The Catholic Pastoral Approach (Michael Scanlan and Randall Cirner)**
1. Christians must overcome the devil and his three major tactics: temptation, opposition, and bondage.
  2. “Deliverance” is found commanding evil spirits and a variety of practices that dispense grace including Bible reading, prayer, serving others, and the sacraments.
- G. The Protestant Pastoral Approach (Peter Bolt and Donald West)**
1. This side of Christ’s second coming, Christians will experience struggling, pain, and suffering, ultimate victory will only come in heaven.
  2. Christians must rely on the ministry of the Word and the ministry of prayer in the context of their local church to overcome such things. Satan can only be dealt with indirectly, not directly.

### **Discussion Question #1**

## **II. A Key Bible Passage on Spiritual Warfare in the New Testament – Ephesians 6:10-20**

- A.** The Posture of Spiritual Warfare: Stand Firm (v. 11, 13)
- B.** The Provisions for Spiritual Warfare: The Armor of God (v. 14-17)
- C.** The Power in Spiritual Warfare: Prayer (v. 18)

## **III. A Church-Based Approach to Spiritual Warfare (Chuck Lawless)**

- A.** The Foundation: Knowing God is the power of His Spirit and understanding who we are individually in Christ and corporately as His Church (Eph. 1:1-3:21)
- B.** Who you are in Christ must affect every area of your life including your personal walk, your family, your church life, and your work (Eph. 4:1-6:10)
- C.** The mission of the church (to make disciples) is resisted by the devil (Matt. 28:18-20)
- D.** The “arrows of the evil one” must be resisted against in 6 key areas (Eph. 6:16)
  1. Exalting God (worship)
    - a. The Enemy invites us to focus on ourselves and our preferences in worship.
    - b. In response, we must stay focused on the Word of God and the Gospel.
  2. Evangelizing the lost
    - a. The Enemy encourages churches to become inward focused.
    - b. In response, we must continually look for ways to reach outside our current circle with a gospel invitation.
  3. Equipping believers

- a. The Enemy attacks believers with pride, discouragement, and apathy.
  - b. In response, we must mentor new believers and hold established believers accountable for their privileges and responsibilities in the church.
- 4. Edifying other through ministry and service
  - a. The Enemy distracts people with pain. (Those who wallow in their pain become the center of their own world).
  - b. In response, we must serve one another in a spirit of love.
- 5. Encountering God in prayer
  - a. The Enemy encourages us to talk more about prayer than to pray.
  - b. In response, we must value prayer as a way to exercise our dependence on God.
- 6. Encouraging one another in fellowship.
  - a. The Enemy works to create disunity between believers and between churches
  - b. In response, we must promote unity and lean into forgiveness.

## Discussion Question #2

### Conclusion

- The Church Reformer, Martin Luther, took a very active approach to spiritual warfare. During his time of hiding in Wartburg Castle, he struggled with depression, mood swings, and constant “pestering” from the devil, evil spirits, and demons. According to legend, one night he threw his inkwell at the devil in defense. Years later, the ink stain was still visible on the wall of Luther’s room at the castle – a testament to disdain for the devil.
- Of all the information that we considered tonight, don’t forget the posture, provision, and power presented in Ephesians 6.

### Discussion Questions

1. What are some indications that someone’s approach to spiritual warfare may not be quite right? How would you provide some help to someone who has veered off in an unbiblical direction?
2. What would you add to the 6 key areas discipleship and spiritual warfare? Are there other ways that Satan fires his arrows? What can believers do in response?