

Intro to Spiritual Warfare – Lesson Outline

Scripture is an important part of our spiritual defense.

In [Ephesians 6](#) Paul tells us we have been given weapons of warfare to defend ourselves.

There's a reason we need to defend ourselves.

[Ephesians 6:12](#) tells us our struggle is *not against flesh and blood, but against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.* (NIV)

The [KJV](#) says it like this: *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.*

Sometimes we forget that some of the things that happen to us are spiritual attacks.

Not all things, but some.

Some of it is our own fleshly choices not to obey.

Sometimes our pride gets in our way.

Sometimes it is an attack from the enemy.

It's important we understand the enemy is a defeated foe.

Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection settled it once and for all.

Jesus was, and IS! victorious.

As Christians we are operating from that victory.

Nothing can ever change that.

Unfortunately, the enemy has deceived and convinced some people that he is the victor.

He's also convinced them they can't win; that this is just how it is – a so-so life.

That's not true!

Christ came so we could have life and have it abundantly.

[John 10:10](#) tells us - *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* (KJV)

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (NIV)

That means we can have a happy, fulfilling life and that while there will be trials in this life, Jesus has overcome the world so we don't have to live a miserable, defeated life.

([John 16:33](#) – *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”* NIV)

(These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. [KJV](#))

Here's the thing, as the father of lies the enemy is really good at teaching and coaxing us to believe he is something he's not. He's also good at causing us to lie to ourselves.

([John 8:44](#) *You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.* NIV)

We lie to and about ourselves and others when we see and believe things that just aren't true.

When we make assumptions or believe so-called facts that aren't reality or that conflict with what God says.

It is so important to be careful with our inner dialogue.

Sometimes when we make a mistake we say things like, “well, that was stupid,” or, “boy am I dumb!”.

We mustn't do that.

We should love and respect ourselves.

We belong to God.

If you wouldn't say something to your friend then you shouldn't say it to yourself!

Remember, a half-truth is a whole lie.

That's why it's so important to know what Scripture says.

The Bible is full of truth.

The more truth you know, the easier it is to spot something that's not truth, to filter out the lies.

I once heard a story about how they train tellers in the banking industry.

There are tons of different ways to counterfeit money.

Instead of teaching them all of that stuff, they teach the tellers to become very familiar with the real bills.

They know how it feels, what it looks like.

They know the little flecks of color in the paper, the metal strip, the watermark.

Knowing it so well, when a counterfeit bill comes across their desk it's easy to identify because it doesn't match the real thing.

You see where I'm going with this?

If we know the truth and know it's parts well, when the lies and half-truths come they are easier to spot.

Sometimes the attacks are direct – we're tempted in some way or another. Or, a half-truth is presented to us.

Sometimes the attacks come from others.

Here's the thing - they don't necessarily have to be big attacks.

Little prompts and nudges can be enough to get us off track, to cause us to take our focus off of Christ (where it belongs) and put it back on ourselves.

Question - We see and watch for the big attacks – but do we really watch for and guard against the little ones?

The nudges, the distractions, the shiny objects that draw our attention away from Christ and onto self or other things? Things that might be okay or not inherently bad, but just not the thing to focus on right now?

For example – sometimes when I try to sit and read my bible I get an overwhelming urge to clean my house.

My house needs cleaning – but at that very moment?

No, the cleaning can wait another 30 minutes while I read.

It's a distraction to keep me out of the Word.

It's important to realize that spiritual warfare is not about going on a devil hunt.

It's about focusing on God and what Christ has done for us but being prepared to handle whatever comes up or gets in the way of a successful walk with Him.

We keep our focus on Christ at all times.

When something comes up we pray, use our weapons of warfare and trust Him to help us and to handle it.

We don't go looking to see if it's the enemy.

We keep our focus on the only thing that matters – God.

That is SO important!

Every second spent looking at the enemy is a second we don't get to spend worshiping, fellowshiping with, praising, and enjoying our walk with Jesus.

Whatever kind of attack it is, this is the reason we need to equip ourselves.

It is a battle.

Thankfully, the Lord has given us weapons for the battle.

Let's start with [Ephesians 6:10](#) –

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.

We need to know who He is - He is God Almighty

We need to know what power He has – and realize that He can and will use it to help and protect us.

Matthew Henry called it being stout-hearted.

He said it was important to have a good heart – a heart set on God and trusting Jesus.

It's being convinced of Christ and the gift He's given us with salvation.

It's being dedicated to God and your faith walk.

Committed to the cause.

It's important to remember we cannot do it ourselves.

We need God to step in and help us.

It is through His power and grace we win – never ours.

Without Him we are completely powerless.

Okay, so what are these weapons?

They are armor.

Think about a knight and his metal armor and it will kind of give you an idea.

[Verse 11](#) tells us to:

11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

God gave us this armor so we can stand and fight.

There are going to be battles in our lives.

It's not just ourselves we are fighting for – it's also our kids, our family, our friends, our government figures.

Anyone we are praying for or witnessing to we are fighting for.

Any situation going on in our lives that we should or could be praying about, we are fighting for.

[Verse 12](#) that we looked at a few minutes ago reminds us it is not people we are fighting.

(12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.)

It's the enemy and his influence.

Remembering this can help you better fight the good fight.

The next verse says: ([Verse 13](#)) -*Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.*

We use this armor to stand our ground and to protect what's ours.

Where it says to stand, it's not just standing around.

This is standing on God's word and believing what it says.

It's standing on the truth and waiting for God to move.

It's standing firmly on the truth, secure in the knowledge God IS going to help us and He IS going to take care of it.

It might not happen in our timing and it might not happen the way we think it should, but He will take care of it for us.

He knows the best way, so we stand firm, waiting and watching expectantly.

God loves us.

He cares about us.

He wants to take care of us and protect us.

When we see the truth of where these struggles come from then we can better know how to respond to them – with the weapons of warfare He's given us.

The actual parts of the armor are listed in [verses 14 - 18](#).

We don't have time to go over them today, but next week we will start looking at the individual pieces.

I encourage you to spend time this week reviewing and studying [Ephesians 6:10-18](#).

¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

This week's homework –

Look at your life and the troubles in it. Are any of them the enemy at work? If so, will you pray about them and ask God to help you with them?

When you see the enemy at work, do you see only the big things and overlook the little things? Why or why not?