

Power in the Holy Spirit

9. DEVELOPING A SPIRITUAL "BATTLE PLAN"



Whether or not we want to accept it, we are in the midst of a battle. All around us there is a battle-taking place in the Spiritual realms, both inward and outward. Through the Spirit, we can become aware of this battle and know how to live in victory, rather than defeat. Understanding the dynamics of the battle, and how we are to engage the enemy is vital if we want victory. For example, what if you were an army trying to engage an enemy and stop its advance, but you did not even know where the attack was coming from? You would be at the mercy of chance, hoping your army has enough force to repulse an attack when it comes. On the other hand, if your army had "intelligence" about the enemy, you could plan for their attack and their reply.

The Bible, through the Holy Spirit allows us to see our enemy and become aware of the *spiritual war*. Without the scriptures, we would be fighting an invisible unknown enemy, without even knowing we are at war. The Bible, revealed through the Spirit of God, has unveiled the invisible world, which surrounds us. In this spiritual world, we have an enemy who is at war with us, and wants to stop the kingdom of God from

advancing. Satan and his fallen angels are the enemy! They seek to take us down, making us ineffective against their work. There is a battle raging all around us, and the tools of Satan are fully engaged in this battle.

Satan uses our old man and our fallen nature to war with us in the spiritual realms, the Holy Spirit dwelling in us prepares us for the spiritual battle ahead. Through scripture and conviction, God's spirit prepares us for battle. Paul in Ephesians chapter 6 describes the equipment of a spiritual warrior.

- 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
 - 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.
 - 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
 - 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,
 - 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;
 - 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.
 - 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;
 - 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints
- Ephesians 6:11-18

Therefore, as spiritual warriors we need to know, we are in a battle, and since we are in battle, we should put together our own battle plan, so we can live the victorious life, advancing the Kingdom of God.

Preparing for the battle

How is the battle waged against us? As we shall see, this battle is waged in the minds of humanity, through whom; events in the physical world are transacted. We are spiritual beings inside a physical body; the war waged is in the battlefield of the mind. Satan is conducting a war in the spiritual realm, engaging our mind in the battle.

- 3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

4 ~~whose minds the god of this age has blinded~~, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them
2 Corinthians 4:4

Here Satan is called *the god of this age*, who blinds the lost so they cannot see the Gospel. The mind of humanity is Satan's battleground; Satan is not fighting a physical war, but a spiritual one, attacking soul and spirit of man. Satan and his fallen angels accomplish this task in the spiritual realms, by lies and deception, appealing to the fallen nature.

When we come to Christ, our mind and thinking transform through the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. We however play a role, where we can yield control of "self" to God's Spirit, or resist. If we yield control of ourselves to the Spirit, we will be filled with the Spirit, as the Lord takes and molds our life into the image of Christ. As much as we yield ourselves, we become more like Christ. For this reason in Romans chapter 12, we read about our need to be human sacrifices, sacrificing the desires of our old nature, being transformed by "the renewing of your mind". Our old nature has a fallen way of thinking, susceptible to the deceptions of Satan.

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Romans 12:1-2

We need to recognize the battle is not ours, but the Holy Spirit living within. The hardest thing for many believers is to get out of the Spirit's way. We refuse to give control of ourselves over and so we constantly in the midst of the struggle for control.

Before a battle can be waged, we need to know where the war is. Where does the enemy attack?

First, we have to understand the battle is within, a stone idol does not make us sin, nor does what someone wears, its what we do with those images within. The choices we choose to make. The attack is through our old fallen nature and the temptations which surround us. Second, we have the ability to choose, we are not helpless in this struggle.

According to Robertson McQuilkin, author of *Life in the Spirit*¹, there are four steps to attaining victory over our old nature and establishing a battle plan.

1. We need to surrender "self" to the Spirit
2. Identify the source of temptation
3. Recognize the Roots of Sin
4. Acknowledge the Taproot

1. We need to surrender "self" to the Spirit

The first course of action is to surrender our self to the Lord. Are we willing to give up the areas in our life? Romans 12 refer to our bodies being a "living sacrifice". What exactly does this mean? In the days of the Jewish priesthood, living animals were scarified; they gave up their lives to atone for the sins of others. In the same way, they gave up their lives, we should give up our past life, and we should be willing to sacrifice our *old nature*. Thereby, we become a "living sacrifice".

For example, after you come to Christ your friends invite you to a bar, which has more then just drinks and chips. You feel the Spirit groan within about going to such a place. You hear a voice within saying you are going to be left out of all the fun and friendship. What do you do? Do you sacrifice this part of your life?

These are just some examples, of what it means to be a living sacrifice; you must be willing to cede control of your life to the Holy Spirit.

2. Identify the source of temptation

¹ Life in the Spirit, Robertson McQuilkin Pg. 174-178, Broadman Holman Publishers 2000, Nashville Tenn

Once we make the conscience effort to surrender our lives, we next need to identify, where the source of our temptation lies. What is the source of our temptation? The Bible is very clear; Satan is a roaring lion, looking for prey to devour.

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. I Peter 5:8-9

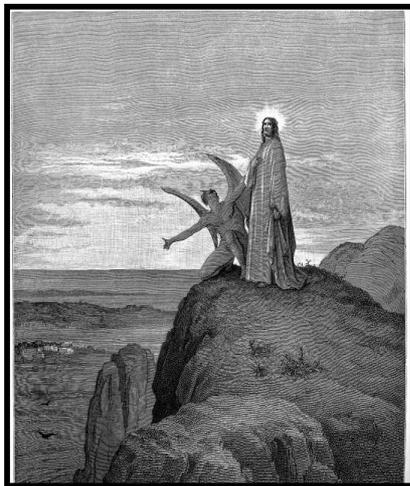
We make the choice when tempted, when we give in to our temptations we are drawn away into sin, when the desire overpowers our new nature. This eventually leads to death, both physically and spiritual if left unchecked.

14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.
15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.
James 1:14-15

The circumstances around me play the role in my sin, these include;

- My inner thoughts, desires, impulses
- People around me
- Things and circumstances
- Satan

God however limits the degree of temptation; Satan is only permitted with so much liberty with his temptations. God allows Satan to tempt us, because our faith is being tried, through these temptations. In the book of Job, we see Satan in action, he however complains about Job, because he is protected by hedge (Job 1:10), which he is not permitted to cross. This also applies to us. God has made a way out with each temptation; Satan is only permitted to go so far. Ultimately, God allows temptation, though God Himself tempts no one.



13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. I Corinthians 10:13

Remember Satan tempted Jesus, with the same process. In Luke 4, Satan tempted Jesus using the same appeals he does to us. In each case, Jesus rebuked Satan with scripture.

1. He tempted Jesus to prove he was the Son of God, by turning stones into bread, while he was hungry.
2. He tempted Jesus with power, turning over his authority of earth's kingdoms if Jesus would worship him.
3. He tempted Jesus with pride, by daring Jesus to cast Himself from the top of the Temple, to demonstrate his importance.

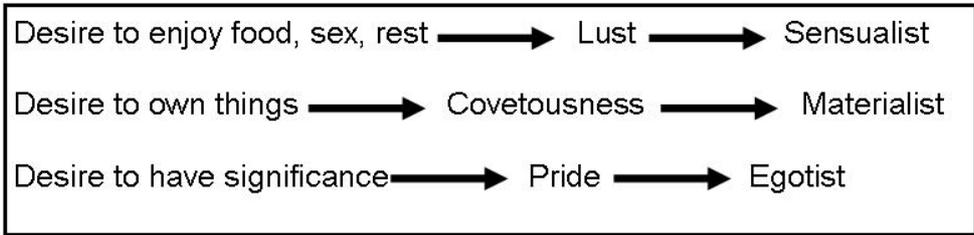
Satan uses the same methods on us, appealing to our desires.

3. Recognize the Root Sin

Satan uses the desires the natural desires we have and perverts them, tempting us so we can fall into sin. Robertson McQuilkin delineates the process of sin, and our need to understand what we are fighting.²

² Life in the Spirit, Robertson McQuilkin Pg. 176, Broadman Holman Publishers 2000, Nashville Tenn.

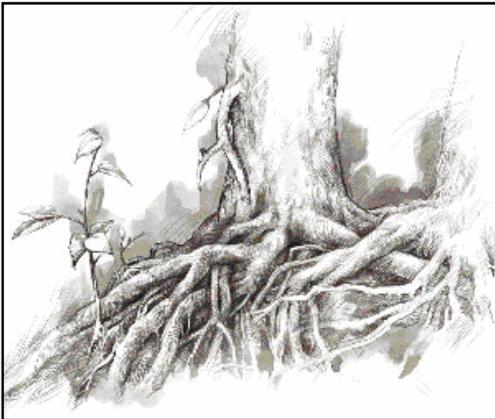
Have you ever stopped to analyze just what temptation is? It doesn't look bad, it looks good; otherwise it wouldn't tempt. And actually God is the one who designed our desires in the first place. God created us to enjoy our bodies, to possess things, to amount to something. But we are forever trying to fulfill those desires in the wrong way. And that's sin. So the next step in our strategy is to identify the enemy, discriminate between what is temptation and what isn't. If I don't even recognize my enemy, how can I fight successfully?



We are born with natural desires, designed by God without which we would just die off as a race. There is a desire for sex,

without it there would be no children. We have a desire to eat, without such we would starve. We have a desire to own things, such as clothes and shelter. All of these are part of our natural design, God created humanity with desires.

For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 1 John 2:16



Satan uses these desires, and causes us to be tempted into sin. Therefore, we need understand, why we sin, what is causing us to act the way we do. Do we hate somebody, because we jealous of the possessions, or importance? Is Satan tempting us with our own significance, appealing to our pride?

Do we really believe God is able to give us the needs we desire? When we sin, we go outside of God's will for our life, fulfilling our needs and rejecting God's provision. This is the real source of our sin. Israel in all their sins, did not believe God was able to deliver them, once they lacked faith in God's ability the rest followed.

For us to begin this battle we need to identify our sins, what is hold us back from being the spiritual warrior God wants.

Roots of Sin	Temptations	How I respond in the flesh
1. What temptations do I have in my flesh that God would not be pleased with?		
2. What things (possessions) do I covet?		
3. What am I tempted to be proud about, ?		

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The Defensive Strategy



We need to realize we are under constant assault, there many more opportunities for us to be tempted, then ever before. Television, DVD's and video, radio, magazines, the internet, Cable and Satellite are some of the many choices of entertainment, which feeds our need of entertainment. Today its very easy to be lulled into sense of spiritual complacency, not aware of the spiritual assault taking place.

In a battle, there is defensive and offensive strategies, the same goes in the spiritual battle. In days past, before radar and air surveillance, cities had designed systems of defense. One system was the wall, the other the watchtower. The watchtower allowed someone to see a

great distance off; if an enemy was approaching, warning could be sent to people in the city, or other watchtowers so eventually a nation could be alerted to potential danger. The walls allowed the city to let those in who were friendly by limiting access through specific openings (gates).

As an ancient city has a defensive strategy, we also should think in terms of spiritual defense. We are under spiritual assault, how do we defend ourselves? Once we identify areas where we are weak, we need to strengthen those parts in our wall. If we find ourselves watching raunchy programs, we need to ask, whom we are letting into our city. An invasion is taking place. The same goes with radio, the internet, and magazines. What images and thoughts are entering our mind that Satan could use to tempt us into sin?

The purpose of the watchtower was to look for potential problems before they became real problems. We also need our own personal watchtower; we need to be on the lookout for potential problems, so we can react pro-active (before) rather than reactive (after) it occurs. We do not want to give Satan a foothold to launch his assault.

Our defensive weapons

The Bible:

Jesus sent an example for every believer, when Satan on the Mount of Temptation confronted Him. Jesus who could have choose any weapon replied to Satan temptations with scripture. Satan tempted Jesus, and he replied with scripture.

The scriptures Jesus used answered the temptations brought forward by Satan. Whatever our issue is we can look to scripture to defend against Satan's assault on us. If we have issues with sexual temptation, we can learn what scripture says about it. We can also memorize verses to help us dealing with our issues. If we have issues rooted in pride, we can do the same. Once we define our issues, we can then target that issue with the world of God.

List your temptations and the scriptural references to help you overcome those issues.

Temptations	Scripture	Scripture to memorize

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Prayer:

We can also take the issue directly to the Lord, we can pray for deliverance from sins and temptations, which beset us. Jesus also modeled this for us, off all people who did not need to pray it would of been Jesus, so if Jesus needed to pray how much more should we.

Jesus facing the betrayal of Judas and the humiliation of the cross, prayed in the Garden, sweating great drops of blood.

You can write out a prayer dealing with your very issue, take it to the Lord.

The Church

The church is made up of believers, both old and young. Many in the church have experienced similar issues facing each one of us today. God gives “gifts” to the body for that very purpose. We can take our issues to pastors and counselors who can guide us through our difficulties.

Also we look for a like minded soul, someone seeking righteousness and as them to be a prayer or accountability partner. Look for someone who will take an interest in your spiritual wellbeing. Meet with the person for mutual prayer and support.

The Offensive Strategy

An offensive strategy means taking the battle to the enemy. You know you have an enemy, why wait the enemy to attack you. Our response does not have to be a reaction. We do not have to wait until we see the bad programs, we can remove their possibility from being shown.

The question we need to ask, is how serious we are about being all that the Lord wants us to be? Are we willing to make the hard steps. Eliminate the potential from occurring; take away Satan’s chance at deception.

Offensive weapons

The Bible:

We should not just study scripture to confront issues we are weak on, scripture is called the sword of the Spirit, its an offensive weapon. Daily Bible reading helps us understand God’s will in our life and prepares us for the assaults which aiming toward us.

Prayer:

Again, our prayers do not have to be defensive, we can ask the Lord to give us a hedge of protection, so we can have victory over the temptations even before they show themselves. We can take our issues before the throne of God.

Fasting:

Fasting allows us to discipline our body and mind, like a warrior in training. Through fasting we can see just how serious the issue is, how much do we hunger for righteousness rather than food this world offers.

Memorization:

Jesus memorized scripture, so why shouldn’t we do the same? Before we are even attacked God’s word, which dwells in us will prepare us the continual assault on our mind.