

Theme: Our strategy in spiritual warfare is to draw near to God, be alert for the attacks of Satan, and stand against, resist, and attack his works.

I. Intro - Strategy and Tactics

- A. Strategy - the art of planning and directing overall military operations and movements in a war or battle. - the big picture of entire conflict
- B. Tactics - the art of disposing armed forces in order of battle and of organizing operations, especially during contact with an enemy - the detail of the fight
- C. Today I want to look at the strategy we have for spiritual war - the big picture of how we fight - our goals
- D. In coming weeks we will look at the tactics - weapons, battlegrounds, etc.
- E. What is big picture of how we engage in spiritual war?

II. Prepared For Spiritual Warfare

- A. Prepare by being strong in the Lord
Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Ephesians 6:10
 - 1. Saw this last week in Equipped for Spiritual Warfare
 - 2. The first step in engaging the enemy in spiritual battle is finding our strength in God
 - 3. This can never be stressed too much - our only strength for spiritual warfare is found in a vibrant, close, consistent walk with Jesus
 - 4. The same thing is stressed in all 3 texts
Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Ephesians 6:10

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. James 4:7–8

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. ⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. ¹ Peter 5:6–7

- a. All three texts begin with drawing close to God
- b. Only after we have drawn near to God and we face the enemy in spiritual warfare

- B. Prepare by being alert and ready for spiritual attack
Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.... ¹³Therefore 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... ¹⁸With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Ephesians 6:10–11, 13

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ¹ Peter 5:8

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. ¹ Corinthians 16:13

- 1. Putting on the armor is being alert and ready for battle
- 2. All of these texts call for us to be alert, ready for the attacks of the enemy
- 3. Any Christian, family or church that is not alert and prepared for spiritual attack will suffer injury when the attack begins and they are not prepared

4. The question is not if Satan and his forces are prowling around, looking for opportunities to tempt, seduce, confuse, and attack - the only question is if we will be prepared

III. Engaging In Spiritual Warfare: Stand, Resist, Attack

A. The key command: stand

Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your **stand** against the devil's schemes. 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. 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**. ¹⁴ **Stand** firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, Ephesians 6:11–14

1. The command to 'stand' - 4 times!
2. Picture is a legion standing against rush of enemy
3. Each soldier and unit as a whole stand their ground - no retreat, no surrender
4. The enemy rushes upon us in force - but we do not turn and run, but stand!
5. As John Bunyan noted long ago - there is no armor for the back - retreat is not an option
6. When under attack we must not give in to temptation; a couple must not give into problems & divorce; members don't leave the church - we stand & we fight against Satan!
7. Tommy's word - be faithful stewards

- a. The temptation in times of battle is to withdraw
- b. We are tempted to leave our post and calling
- c. We must be faithful stewards of what God has given us to do - in our life, our family, our work, the church, our community
- d. Stand against the Devil by being a faithful steward of what God has called you to do!

B. Stand = resist the devil and his work

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ **Resist him, standing firm in the faith**, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. 1 Peter 5:8–9

Submit yourselves, then, to God. **Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.** James 4:7

1. When we stand we are resisting the Devil, his schemes, his forces, his temptations, his attacks
2. When we resist the Devil, he will continue to push, but eventually he must flee. He can not stand up to the well armed believer.
3. But remember - we do not stand and resist in our own strength, but in God's!
4. We stand and resist by confessing sin, repenting, crying out to God for deliverance and for him to break the strongholds
Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. James 4:7–10

- a. When Satan attacks we resist his attacks by drawing near to God
- b. We draw near to God by confessing and repenting of sins and doubts that spiritual warfare has revealed in our hearts and lives
- c. Spiritual warfare is used by God to reveal our hidden fears, doubts, sins, and strongholds. As these are revealed, we resist them by turning to God in confession and repentance.
- d. Job - very righteous man, but spiritual attack revealed hidden fears, doubts, strongholds, and bad theology. When he confessed this, God brought an end to the trials.

C. Stand, resist, and counter-attack

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 saints.** ¹⁹ **Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel,** ²⁰ **for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.** Ephesians 6:17–20

1. Sword is for offense - to counter-attack
2. Prayer includes defensive and offensive prayers
3. Praying for God's will to be done, for Gospel to spread, for darkness to be pushed back
4. Satan intends for his attack to discourage us and cause us to cease embracing the word & prayer, but God intends to use it to cause us to embrace, pray and proclaim the Gospel.
5. When Satan attacks, we must stand and resist the attack - and then go on the offensive via the Word, prayer, and sharing the Gospel.

6. We will look more at the weapons of our warfare in coming weeks

IV. Applying the Word

A. Am I standing against spiritual attack?

1. Spiritual attack is an ever present reality for believers
2. Do I recognize the attacks when they come - or do I live like a practical atheist?
3. When attack comes, do I resist it or give in to it?
4. When temptation arises, do I resist it by the Word and prayer, or do I give in?
5. Do I set high fences to prevent future attacks of temptation - or do I foolishly give Satan access?
6. When I sin, do I confess my sin to God and others, or do I make excuses or deny it?
7. When attack comes, do I continue to be a faithful steward, or do I abandon my post?
8. When attack seems overwhelming, do I counter-attack by Word and prayer, or do I retreat?
9. Gospel affirmation - Christ has equipped you for battle, and he goes with you - take up your armor and stand with one another!

B. Closing prayer to engage in the spiritual war

Engaging In Spiritual Warfare

Ephesians 6:10-20; 1 Peter 5:6-9; James 4:7-10

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Prayer

Romans 16:20

Teaching keywords: spiritual warfare; Satan and demons; Christian life; word of God; prayer; calling and work

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. Romans 16:20

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

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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. 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 saints. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. Ephesians 6:10–20

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⁷ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. James 4:7–10