Spiritual Warfare

Chapter 4 – Warrior Training



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Spiritual Warfare – How to Prepare

The goal of spiritual warfare is not the warfare itself. The objective is not simply to pray, confront darkness, or engage in spiritual activity. The purpose is victory—the advancement of God's kingdom, the defeat of the enemy's works, and the establishment of God's purposes in the lives of people. We do not engage in battle merely for the sake of battle. We continue until the enemy has been resisted, his influence has been broken, and spiritual ground has been gained.

No nation enters into war without preparation. An untrained and unprepared army is vulnerable to defeat. Every nation maintains a group of people whose responsibility is to defend against threats, remain prepared for conflict, and respond when necessary. They are equipped with the weapons and resources required for battle, and they are trained extensively in how to use them.

Before soldiers ever enter combat, they undergo a rigorous process of preparation. In the United States military, this beginning stage is known as basic training or boot camp. Its purpose is not simply to teach information, but to transform civilians into soldiers who are prepared to function effectively in a military environment.

A brief summary of basic training reveals several important principles: First, recruits learn their identity and purpose as part of a team. They adapt to a new way of life, learn the values of the organization they have joined, and begin developing the discipline and confidence necessary for service.

Secondly, they learn how to use the weapons and equipment provided to them. They do not simply possess weapons—they are trained to understand them, practice with them, and use them effectively when needed.

Thirdly, they develop the ability to operate as part of a unit. They learn that success in battle depends not only on individual skill but also on teamwork, coordination, and trust.

Finally, they apply and refine everything they have learned. Training prepares them for the realities they will eventually face.

Every branch of the military has a similar process. Soldiers are not recruited and immediately sent into combat with the expectation that they will figure things out along the way. Their preparation is intentional because the consequences of being unprepared are far too serious**.**

The same principle is true of spiritual warfare.
Unfortunately, many believers enter the Christian life without being adequately prepared for the battles that will be encountered. We often assume that a weekly

sermon will provide all the equipping necessary, or we settle into a mindset that accepts all hardship as simply part of life with true victory only possible when we reach heaven.

While many Christians are familiar with biblical language about warfare, spiritual weapons, and believers being described as soldiers, many have never been taught how these truths apply practically to their lives. They do not understand how to recognize spiritual opposition, how to use the weapons God has provided, or how to position themselves for victory. The result is that many believers experience repeated seasons of defeat—not because God has failed them, but because they have never learned how to fight.

When the enemy advances, they often respond passively, assuming that every hardship must simply be accepted as God's will. If they resist at all, their response is frequently based on emotion rather than spiritual understanding. But emotions are not among the weapons that Scripture describes as being mighty through God.

A soldier who has not been trained will struggle in battle. Likewise, a believer who has not been equipped for spiritual warfare will struggle to stand against the enemy's attacks.

Before we examine specific weapons and strategies, we must first understand the foundational preparation required for a life of spiritual victory.

THIS MUST BE SETTLED FIRST

#1 – ENLIST!! No matter how interested someone may be in becoming a soldier, interest alone does not qualify them for the battlefield. A person cannot simply walk onto the field of combat, pick up military equipment, and expect to participate in a conflict that requires training, preparation, and accountability. The issue is not a lack of desire—the issue is that they have not yet met the requirements necessary to become part of the fighting force. Before someone can fight, they must first become a member of the team. The same principle applies to spiritual warfare.

The principles discussed in this booklet are not intended to be applied apart from a relationship with Jesus Christ. Spiritual authority is not something that can simply be studied or imitated; it flows from belonging to Him. Jesus expressed it this way:

"You must be born again." John 3:3

What Does It Mean to Be Born Again?

Perhaps you have heard that phrase before—"born again." But if Jesus said it is necessary, then it is important that we understand what He meant.

The person Jesus spoke these words to was a man named Nicodemus. He was not a godless or someone unfamiliar with spiritual matters. He was a respected religious leader who knew the Scriptures and had devoted his life to religious practice. Yet Jesus told him that his religious knowledge, position, and accomplishments were not enough. Nicodemus needed something that human effort could never produce: a new life from God.

The message of Scripture is clear—every person has a problem called sin. No amount of good works, religious activity, or personal effort can remove that problem or make us worthy to stand before a holy God. We cannot earn salvation because we have all fallen short.

But God, in His great love for humanity, made a way. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to take our place. Through His death on the cross, Jesus paid the penalty for our sin so that we could receive forgiveness and be brought into right relationship with God. He took what belonged to us—our sin and guilt—and offered us what belongs to Him—His righteousness and acceptance before the Father. This is the great exchange.

Although Jesus accomplished this work approximately 2,000 years ago, each individual must personally respond to His offer. Salvation is not inherited, earned, or automatically applied. Every person must choose whether they will receive the forgiveness and new life that Jesus offers.

Sadly, many reject this gift because they are unwilling to humble themselves before God. They do not want to acknowledge their need for a Savior or surrender control of their lives to anyone other than themselves. In doing so, they turn away from the forgiveness, freedom, and eternal life that God freely offers. I hope that will not be your response.

If you have never surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, received forgiveness for your sins, and experienced the new birth He spoke about, you can make that decision today. There are no special words or a specific formula that saves a person. Salvation comes through genuine faith and surrender to Jesus. However, for those who are unfamiliar with prayer or unsure what to say, the following prayer can serve as an example of what it means to respond to God:

"Father, I acknowledge that I am a sinner and that my life has been lived to satisfy my own desires without any regard for You. I never realized that it was wrong to follow my heart, but now I understand that I need to follow Your ways. I believe that Jesus Christ is the sinless Son of God and that He was born into this world to save sinners. When He died on the cross, He paid the penalty for my sin so that I could be holy and blameless in Your sight. So, I ask that You would forgive me for my life of sin, wash me in the

blood of Jesus, fill me with Your Holy Spirit, and transform my life into what You want it to be. In Jesus' name, Amen."

If you prayed this prayer sincerely, with a genuine desire to receive the new life Jesus offers, I encourage you to contact me using the email address provided at the back of this book and share your decision.

The first step in spiritual warfare is not learning how to fight. It is becoming part of the family of God.

#2 – COMMITMENT TO THE SHARED CAUSE - No soldier is enlisted without first making a commitment to the nation they have chosen to serve. A person cannot simply pick up a weapon and enter a battlefield on their own terms. They must first pledge allegiance, accept the responsibilities of service, and submit themselves to the authority of those appointed over them.

When someone joins the military, they are no longer living solely for their own preferences or personal plans. They become part of something larger than themselves. They come under the authority of their commanding officers, embrace the mission of their unit, and commit to obedience as a way of life. They are trained, equipped, and prepared to engage the enemy—even when that requires sacrifice, discomfort, relocation, or personal risk.

It is significant that Paul repeatedly used the language of soldiers and warfare when describing the Christian life. He understood that following Jesus involves far more than personal salvation and individual blessing. It involves surrendering ourselves to the purposes of God and joining His mission in the earth.

You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. 2 Timothy 2:3-4

Christianity is not simply about securing a place in heaven and then living comfortably until we arrive there. It is an invitation into something far greater—a life of partnership with God, advancing His kingdom and reflecting His purposes in the world.

Unfortunately, many believers never move beyond their initial commitment to Jesus. They receive salvation but never fully surrender to His mission. They never discover the joy, fulfillment, and spiritual adventure that comes from actively participating in what God is doing on the earth.

Imagine planning a trip to Disney. There are different levels of experience available to you. The first requirement is having a ticket. Without admission, you cannot enter the park. But beyond that, there are choices that shape the quality of your experience.

One person may choose to stay at a nearby Airbnb, drive back and forth each day, prepare their own meals, and experience only certain aspects of the vacation. Another person may choose to stay at a Disney resort, eat at the restaurants, immerse themselves in the atmosphere, and enjoy the full experience from beginning to end. Both people have access to the same destination. But their experiences will be dramatically different because of the level of investment they were willing to make.

The same principle applies to our relationship with God.The depth and effectiveness of our Christian life will be greatly influenced by the level of commitment we are willing to give. Scripture makes this principle clear:

For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. Galatians 6:8

God has made incredible things available to us, but we experience the fullness of those things as we surrender ourselves to Him and actively participate in His purposes.
As a citizen of the United States, I pay taxes that help fund our military and support those who are sent into dangerous situations. I am not personally deployed to war zones. In fact, I am not qualified to serve in that capacity. While that arrangement is appropriate in a military context, it cannot be transferred into the Christian life. There are not a select few believers who are responsible for prayer, intercession, spiritual warfare, and advancing the kingdom while everyone else simply watches from the sidelines. Every follower of Jesus has a role. Every believer has been equipped. Every soldier has a place on the battlefield.

When one soldier abandons their position, the entire unit becomes more vulnerable. You do not need to be afraid of fully committing yourself to the mission of Jesus Christ. This is not a life of restriction or loss—it is where true joy, purpose, and fulfillment are found. There is nothing like seeing the power of Jesus at work through your life as darkness is confronted, strongholds are broken, and people experience freedom through the authority of His name.

This is the adventure you have been invited into. It is time to be fully committed.

Are you ready?

and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. 2 Corinthians 5:15

#3 – FOLLOWING ORDERS - When a military operation begins, it does not happen randomly or without direction. A strategy has been developed, objectives have been established, and orders have been given. Every person involved must understand their role in the mission, even if they do not have complete knowledge of every detail of the overall plan. A soldier's responsibility is not to understand everything the commander

knows. Their responsibility is to trust the one who has given the orders and faithfully carry out their assignment.

In a military operation, one person's failure to fulfill their responsibility can place others in danger and compromise the entire mission. Paul understood this principle. He knew his assignment because Jesus Himself had given him his marching orders:

"to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me." Acts 26:18

How did Paul have such clarity about his purpose? How did he know exactly what he was called to do? He heard the voice of the Lord. These words were spoken by Jesus during Paul's encounter on the road to Damascus—the moment when his life was radically transformed. From that day forward, Paul reorganized his entire life around the assignment he had received. He knew his mission, and he devoted himself completely to carrying it out.

He had his orders, and he moved forward with unwavering determination. That obedience brought him into direct conflict with the kingdom of darkness. Paul faced opposition, persecution, imprisonment, and countless attacks because he was advancing the purposes of God. Yet he was able to endure because he was confident that he was operating according to the command of the One who had sent him. When Jesus gives you an assignment and something stands in the way of that obedience, that obstacle must be confronted through prayer and spiritual warfare. The resistance does not mean you are outside the will of God; often, it is evidence that you are moving directly against the purposes of darkness.

Many believers remain trapped in confusion and passivity because they do not understand their role in God's mission. They hesitate to engage because they do not recognize the battle taking place around them or understand how they are called to participate.

Often, we make discovering God's purpose more complicated than it needs to be. Most of us will not have a dramatic "Damascus road" experience where Jesus audibly reveals every detail of our assignment. However, God does not intend for His people to wander aimlessly. He leads, equips, and directs those who seek Him.

If you already understand your place in the army of God and recognize the assignment He has given you, then move forward with confidence, courage, and expectation. There is a great adventure ahead. But if you are still seeking clarity about your role, do not become discouraged. The next step is where we begin.

#4 - MAKE SURE YOU ARE TUNED IN TO THE MOST IMPORTANT VOICE. A soldier must be able to recognize the voice of his commander. Without that ability, critical instructions and orders necessary for the mission may never be received. In the same way, followers of Jesus must learn to recognize His voice so that we can walk in obedience to His purposes. Thankfully, Jesus assures us that hearing His voice is possible:

I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. John 10:14-16

Jesus describes His relationship with us as that of a shepherd and His sheep. His sheep know Him, and they recognize His voice. The issue is not whether He is speaking—the issue is whether we have positioned ourselves to hear.

For many believers, one of the greatest obstacles to hearing God is the constant noise that surrounds us. We live in a world filled with endless voices competing for our attention. Phones, social media, entertainment, news, podcasts, and countless other distractions can create a continual stream of information that leaves little room for quietness before God.

Even good things can sometimes become distractions. Christian music, sermons, and teaching resources are valuable gifts, but there are moments when they need to be set aside so that we can simply be still in His presence.

God is not distant or silent. He is a living God who speaks. The challenge is that we are not always a listening people.

I have experienced many times when I faced a difficult situation and immediately tried to solve the problem through my own reasoning and understanding. My natural response was to analyze, strategize, and find a solution. Yet what often followed was frustration, unnecessary struggle, and a realization that my own wisdom was not enough.

Eventually, when I reached the end of my own ideas and became still before God, He would provide the direction I needed. The answer was often already available; I simply had not taken the time to listen. How many difficulties could we avoid if we learned to seek God's direction before moving forward?

Waiting on the Lord is sometimes viewed as inactivity—as if we are wasting valuable time that could be spent doing something productive. But in reality, waiting on God is one of the most productive things we can do because it positions us to move according to His wisdom rather than our own.

A soldier who ignores the commander's instructions may move quickly, but they may move in the wrong direction. In the same way, a believer who acts without hearing from God may expend great energy while missing the purpose and strategy of heaven.

Before we rush into battle, we must learn to listen. The voice of our Commander is not only available to us—it is essential for us.

#5 - KEEP YOUR MIND RIGHT AND YOUR HEART FREE - I have noticed a pattern in my own life: when I have been disobedient to the Lord in an area, my first instinct is often to hesitate before approaching Him. Instead of running toward God for help, I find myself wanting to withdraw. But this reveals something important—it exposes a mindset rooted in performance rather than grace.

Performance-based living is destructive to our spiritual confidence. It weakens our faith, limits our boldness, and causes us to hesitate in the very moments when we most need to engage in spiritual warfare.

Many of us were conditioned from childhood to understand that privileges and rewards were connected to our behavior. For example, imagine bringing home a report card with failing grades in several classes. You may hesitate to ask your parents if you can spend the night at a friend's house because you already know your poor performance has affected your chances of receiving any benefits. Even if your parents are loving and generous, you may assume that your actions have disqualified you from receiving what you want. And even if you gather the courage to ask, you may do so without any real expectation of a positive answer. Unfortunately, many believers approach God in a similar way.

Our relationship with God is established by grace through faith, not by our ability to perform. We do not earn His love, His acceptance, or His willingness to respond to us through our own efforts. To be clear, obedience matters. God desires that we live lives surrendered to Him, and obedience brings blessing, freedom, and spiritual maturity. From the moment we are born again, the Holy Spirit begins working within us, creating a desire to know God and walk according to His ways. But we must understand this distinction: our obedience is a response to God's grace, not a requirement for earning His grace.

Even when we are walking in all the obedience we understand, the enemy can still launch accusations against us. One of his fiery darts is the suggestion that we are too imperfect, too inconsistent, or too spiritually immature to expect anything from God. If we accept that lie, our confidence before God begins to erode.

Instead of approaching Him boldly, we shrink back. Instead of praying with faith and authority, we pray with hesitation and uncertainty. Instead of resisting the enemy with confidence and watching him flee, we become discouraged and spiritually immobilized.

Can you imagine how much the enemy delights in seeing a child of God paralyzed by shame and condemnation—even temporarily? Do not give him that opportunity.

Guard your heart from measuring your worthiness based on your performance. When accusations come, remind yourself of the truth of God's grace. Preach the gospel to yourself again. Settle this firmly in your heart:

You are not worthy of God's goodness because of your own efforts. You are worthy because Jesus has made you worthy. Because of Him, God has chosen to lavish His grace, love, and goodness upon you—not only on your best days, but also on your worst days. His kindness is not dependent upon your perfection. His faithfulness is not determined by your performance.

So when you find yourself in a difficult season or when you recognize areas where you have fallen short, do not run from God. Run toward Him. Thank Him for His mercy. Receive His forgiveness. Remember that His love never fails.

And then get back in the fight.