# Spiritual Warfare

# Chapter 5 – Warfare Strategies



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## UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE OF THE FIGHT

The term *spiritual warfare* is often used rather casually. Many people assume it is something reserved for those who are especially mature in their faith or who have some unique spiritual calling. But nothing could be further from the truth. Spiritual warfare is a normal part of every believer's life because every follower of Jesus will encounter opposition from the kingdom of darkness. Every believer needs to fight.

The forces of darkness are actively working to blind both unbelievers and believers to the truth of God. For those who do not know Christ, the enemy's objective is to keep them from salvation and ultimately from eternal life with God. For believers, his strategy is different. He seeks to obscure our understanding of what belongs to us through Christ and prevent us from walking in the fullness of the inheritance we have received through the new covenant established by the cross.

Although the enemy cannot steal the salvation that has been secured through Jesus, he will attempt to steal our joy, effectiveness, and spiritual fruitfulness. He wants to keep us living beneath the reality of what God has provided, frustrated as we read the promises of Scripture but fail to experience them in our daily lives. This is why spiritual warfare matters. There is a definite purpose behind the battles we face.

Consider an example from the Old Testament. The first recorded battle Israel fought after leaving Egypt occurred in Numbers 21:1-31 as they journeyed toward the Promised Land. As they traveled through territories occupied by other nations, they attempted to pass through peacefully. However, Sihon, king of the Amorites, refused their request and came against them in battle. Israel defeated Sihon and his army, but they did more than win a conflict—they took possession of the land and settled there.

This reveals an important principle: we do not engage in warfare simply for the sake of fighting. The purpose of the battle is victory. The goal is to defeat the enemy and take possession of the territory God has intended for us.
Spiritual warfare is not about endlessly battling without progress. It is about advancing the kingdom of God, overcoming opposition, and walking in the promises that belong to us through Jesus.

In the following sections, we will examine what I like to call Warfare Strategies—principles that will help us recognize the enemy's tactics, engage effectively, and walk in greater victory. My prayer is that these truths will equip you to fight well and experience more fully all that God has made available to you.

## TYPES OF WARFARE

### Holiness warfare

I have never heard anyone use the phrase "holiness warfare," and I'm not sure it is the best terminology. But to give you a brief understanding of what I mean by this phrase, it is the warfare we are engaged in when we choose obedience to God and honoring Him rather than responding in the flesh, vindicating ourselves or taking things into our own hands.

In Genesis 30, Jacob experienced the consequences of dealing with someone who was, in many ways, just like himself. The deceiver found himself deceived as his uncle Laban manipulated their agreement concerning Jacob's wages. Jacob had agreed to continue working for Laban if he could keep all the sheep that were spotted or speckled. Laban agreed—but then immediately removed every spotted and speckled animal from the flock and placed them under the care of his sons. Jacob was left with essentially nothing.

There were many ungodly ways Jacob could have responded. He could have fought back, manipulated the situation, demanded what he believed was rightfully his, or attempted to outmaneuver Laban. After all, deception and self-preservation had been part of Jacob's character in the past. But this time, we do not see Jacob responding in the flesh.

Instead, he developed a unique approach to breeding the sheep—one that cannot be fully explained by human understanding—and God intervened. The flocks that belonged to Laban began producing spotted and speckled offspring, and Jacob's wealth increased greatly. Rather than taking matters into his own hands, Jacob trusted God to defend and provide for him. And God was faithful to vindicate him.

Years ago, I experienced something similar. I had been a Christian for less than a year when the Lord blessed me with an incredible job opportunity. Shortly after I began working there, a woman in the office developed an immediate dislike for me. She spoke to me and about me in ways that were condescending and hurtful. Her words were sharp, and I felt like I was facing a constant emotional attack. I had done nothing to provoke this treatment, and I struggled to understand why it was happening.

I began praying about the situation because I did not know how to respond. As I sought the Lord, I sensed Him clearly directing me not to defend myself or respond in the same spirit. I was to treat her only with love. That instruction was incredibly difficult.

Every natural instinct wanted to justify myself, defend my reputation, and make sure others understood what was happening. It was painful, frustrating, and at times

embarrassing to continue showing kindness while receiving hostility in return. But I obeyed. After 18 months, the Lord promoted me to a position where I became her supervisor. Twenty-six years later, she still works for me. Every year on Boss's Day, she gives me a thoughtful card expressing appreciation and telling me that I am the best boss she could have hoped for.

Had I chosen to respond according to my emotions and defend myself in the moment, I doubt I would have this testimony to share today. Scripture reminds us:

*the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. James 1:20*

Our natural reactions rarely produce the character God desires to form within us. Anger, pride, and self-defense may feel justified, but they often prevent God from accomplishing something deeper in us and through us. But obedience opens the door for God's purposes.

The greatest blessing from that season was not merely that the situation changed. The greater work was what God produced in me while I waited. He exposed areas of pride, brought about a deeper level of surrender, and drew me closer to Jesus.

When that season ended, I had gained something far more valuable than vindication. I had gained an unshakable confidence that when God asks for difficult obedience, He is always faithful—and that obedience produces fruit far beyond what we can see in the moment.

**Vengeance warfare**

Yes, I know that this seems to contradict what you just read and that Scripture says:

*"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," Hebrews 10:30*

So let me clarify what I mean by "vengeance warfare."I am not talking about taking revenge against people who hurt us. Scripture is clear that vengeance belongs to God, and we must never allow our hearts to become consumed with bitterness, retaliation, or a desire to see others harmed. The battle is not against flesh and blood.

But there is a biblical principle that when the enemy attacks, we do not simply absorb the damage and retreat. We respond by advancing the kingdom of God. We take what was intended for harm and allow God to turn it into an opportunity for greater victory. Let me explain.

Many years ago, I heard a pastor preach a message that has encouraged me repeatedly. It was based on the story of Samson. Most people are familiar with Samson and Delilah, but many are less familiar with the story of Samson's Philistine wife.

Much of Samson's recorded life is marked by one conflict after another. He married a Philistine woman, and during the wedding celebration—which lasted as long as seven days—Samson presented a riddle to thirty young men at the feast. He offered a reward to whoever could solve it, with the expectation that the loser would provide the prize. The thirty men could not solve the riddle, so they threatened Samson's wife, telling her they would kill her and her father's household if she did not discover the answer and reveal it to them. Under pressure, she pleaded with Samson until he finally told her the answer. She then gave it to the men, allowing them to win the challenge.

When Samson realized what had happened, he was furious. He left the wedding feast without his wife. His father-in-law assumed Samson no longer wanted her and gave her to another man. When Samson later discovered this, he responded by setting fire to the Philistines' fields, destroying their crops. The Philistines retaliated by burning Samson's wife and father-in-law to death. Samson responded by striking down many of them. Eventually, the Philistines came to capture him, and Samson defeated them, killing one thousand men.

The details are complicated, but the pattern is simple:

- You take my wife — I destroy your fields.
- You destroy my wife — I strike your people.
- You come against me — one thousand of you fall.

Every attack was met with a response. Samson refused to allow the enemy to continue advancing without consequence. This is the principle I want us to understand: when the enemy brings destruction into our lives, we do not simply endure the attack and accept the loss. Through the authority of Jesus Christ, we can respond by purposely advancing the purposes of God. The goal is not personal revenge. The goal is kingdom advancement.

Recently, a young friend of mine experienced the painful ending of a relationship. In the aftermath, he battled intense discouragement and struggled with recurring thoughts that weighed heavily on him.

One morning during a prayer meeting, something shifted. He experienced a breakthrough. As he shared what had happened, I realized that the Lord had revealed this principle of responding to the enemy's attacks with kingdom advancement.

He made a decision: every time those discouraging thoughts came against him, instead of allowing them to pull him downward, he would share the gospel with the person closest to him in that moment. The enemy intended to use pain to isolate and discourage him. Instead, that pain became a catalyst for more forcefully advancing the kingdom of God.

That is vengeance warfare.

This is about refusing to let the enemy have the final word. Let the enemy know that if he chooses to attack your life, he will not walk away with a victory. Every attempt to hinder God's purposes can become an opportunity for greater kingdom impact.

Do not simply survive the attack. Turn the battle into an opportunity for victory.

**RIGHT UNDER THE ENEMY'S NOSE**

One of my favorite stories from the life of David is found in the account of his mighty men. While David waited for God's appointed time to become king over Israel, he gathered around him a group of loyal followers who became skilled warriors and faithful companions. These men fought alongside David through difficult battles and eventually became known as his "mighty men."

What stands out about these men is their devotion to David. They were not merely soldiers following orders; they were men who understood his heart and were willing to act on his desires, even when doing so required extraordinary courage. We see this in one remarkable moment:

*Then three of the thirty chief men went down at harvest time and came to David at the cave of Adullam. And the troop of Philistines encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. David was then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. And David said with longing, "Oh, that someone would give me a drink of the water from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. — 2 Samuel 23:13-16*

At this time, the Philistines had established a military presence in Bethlehem, David's hometown. This was enemy territory. Yet when these mighty men heard David express his desire for water from the well of Bethlehem, they did not focus on the danger surrounding them. They were not intimidated by the presence of the enemy or the risk involved in accomplishing their mission. They entered the enemy's camp, retrieved the water, and returned successfully to David.

We are not told how many Philistine soldiers stood between them and their goal. What we do know is that they refused to allow the enemy's presence to determine their response. Their loyalty and commitment were greater than their fear.

This story gives us an important lesson about spiritual warfare. There will be moments when the enemy seems close, when opposition feels overwhelming, and when we are tempted to remain quiet and avoid drawing attention to ourselves. But that is not the posture God has called us to have.

We are reminded fear is not our inheritance and that we are not powerless in the battle:

*But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. — Hebrews 10:39*

*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. — 2 Timothy 1:7*

*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds. — 2 Corinthians 10:4*

The enemy may establish his position, but he does not have the authority to intimidate the people of God. But he will if he is left unchallenged. Like David's mighty men, we are called to recognize who we serve, understand the mission before us, and move forward with courage. Victory often requires us to step into places where fear tells us not to go.

**REMOVE THE RUBBISH**

After a remnant of Israel returned to Jerusalem from Babylonian captivity, Nehemiah led the people in rebuilding the wall around the city, which had been destroyed. As they began the rebuilding process, they faced an unexpected obstacle: the remains of the old wall.

The old wall was not only damaged—it was now debris. And that debris became a hindrance to rebuilding something new.

*Then Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is failing, and there is so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall." And our adversaries said, "They will neither know nor see anything, till we come into their midst and kill them and cause the work to cease." — Nehemiah 4:10-11*

Do you understand what this rubbish represented? It was the remains of something that once had value but was no longer serving its original purpose. The old wall had once provided protection, but now its broken pieces were obstructing the construction of the new one.

Before the new wall could be completed, the debris had to be removed. Their failure to deal with the rubbish created vulnerability and made them susceptible to a surprise attack from the enemy. This is a powerful picture for our own lives.

Could this describe you? Has your life become cluttered with the remains of past seasons? Are there unresolved disappointments, failures, wounds, or frustrations that are taking up space where God desires to build something new?

Sometimes the greatest obstacle to moving forward is not an active attack from the enemy—it is the debris left behind from what has already ended. There are things God wants to do in your future that require you to release what He has already brought you through. The old season served its purpose, but it cannot become the foundation for the new thing God is building. What was once useful may now simply be taking up space.

When we remain focused on what cannot be changed, we risk missing what God is doing now. The past cannot be relived or rebuilt, but the present moment is where obedience happens and where preparation for the future takes place. Every moment spent looking back at what is gone is a moment we are not investing in what God has placed before us.

The old wall is gone.

The rubble must be cleared.

There is a new wall to build.

**FIGHT CONFIDENTLY BECAUSE OF WHO HE IS**

*And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses." — Nehemiah 4:14*

The people rebuilding Jerusalem had just learned that their enemies were preparing to attack them. Fear began to take hold. Their situation was intimidating, and their enemies appeared powerful. But Nehemiah did not encourage them by pointing to their own strength or abilities. He directed their attention to something far greater: the greatness of the Lord. Their courage would not come from having superior leaders, a stronger army, or better resources. Their confidence would come from remembering who God was.

This is one of the greatest keys to spiritual warfare. Our confidence does not come from believing in our own abilities. It comes from knowing the One who fights with us.

I remember my first experience in deliverance ministry. I felt intimidated by the situation and very aware of my own limitations. I questioned whether I was prepared. I felt small and inadequate. But I will never forget the moment when I commanded the

demonic spirits, in the name of Jesus, to leave—and they obeyed. Hearing them respond to the authority of Jesus' name left a permanent impression on me. It was a tangible reminder that the power of Christ is not theoretical. It is real, and it is greater than every force of darkness.

Whenever I am tempted to forget how powerful and victorious God is, I remember that moment—and many others like it. I remember His authority. I remember His dominion over darkness. I remember that the enemy is not equal to Him. And remembering who He is gives me courage to fight.

When Israel was preparing to enter the Promised Land and face the nations occupying it, God gave them a warning:

*Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren,*
*— Deuteronomy 4:9-10*

It seems almost impossible that Israel could forget what God had done for them. They had walked through the Red Sea on dry ground. They had watched their enemies be destroyed behind them. They had experienced daily provision from heaven as God supplied their needs in the wilderness.

Yet God knew the tendency of the human heart. Even the most remarkable encounters with His power can become distant memories when life becomes busy and ordinary. The pressures, responsibilities, and distractions of daily life can slowly push God's faithfulness to the background. But if we are going to stand courageously in spiritual warfare, we must intentionally remember.

We need to remember the prayers God has answered, the doors He has opened, the battles He has won, and the moments when His faithfulness carried us through situations we could not overcome on our own.

For many years, I have documented significant things the Lord has done in my life. Periodically, I return to those journals and remember what He has brought me through. Every time I do, my joy increases and my faith is strengthened. I am reminded that the God who worked before is still the same God today.

Those reminders give me strength to continue resisting the enemy's attempts to discourage me or convince me to give up. Often, the accusations and fears we face today are the same voices we heard before previous breakthroughs. When we remember how God responded then, those voices lose their authority.

Take time to intentionally reflect on what God has done for you. Not just generally—specifically. Remember the details. Remember the moments when He provided, protected, delivered, healed, guided, and strengthened you.
Let those memories become fuel for your faith.

A warrior who remembers the victories of the past can face the battles of today with confidence, because he knows the One who fought for him before will fight for him again.

**STAY ALERT**

*So it was, from that time on, that half of my servants worked at construction, while the other half held the spears, the shields, the bows, and wore armor; and the leaders were behind all the house of Judah. Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon. Every one of the builders had his sword girded at his side as he built. And the one who sounded the trumpet was beside me. — NEHEMIAH 4:16-18*

I find it interesting that even though there were certain people whose specific assignment was to hold weapons and wear armor, those who were primarily engaged in other tasks still carried a weapon and remained prepared for battle. They had different responsibilities, but they shared the same awareness: there was an enemy, and that enemy was looking for an opportunity to stop the work. Nobody was exempt from the battle.

The people rebuilding Jerusalem understood something that we must also understand—our assignment from God does not remove our need for spiritual vigilance. In fact, the very work God has called us to do often becomes the reason we experience opposition. The enemy is not threatened by believers who are simply existing; he is threatened by believers who are actively building the kingdom of God.

I do not believe that God ever intended for the responsibility of warfare to solely be the assignment of a specific group of people called intercessors or prayer warriors. I am thankful for these people and for the grace God has given them to engage in extended seasons of prayer. There are people who carry a unique burden for prayer and who faithfully stand before God on behalf of others. Their ministry is precious and necessary. But their calling does not remove my responsibility. I cannot delegate my warfare to someone else.

Someone else's prayer life cannot substitute for my own. Someone else's faithfulness cannot replace my obedience. While there are people who may have a special grace for intercession, every believer has been invited into a life of prayer, dependence upon God, and resistance against the enemy.

The enemy does not only attack certain people. He does not only oppose those in ministry or those with a specific spiritual gift. Every person who belongs to Jesus has entered into a conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness. Therefore, every believer must learn to stand.
Peter gives us this warning:

*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. — 1 Peter 5:8*

The words Peter uses are intentional. To be sober means to remain clear-minded and free from spiritual dullness. To be vigilant means to stay awake, watchful, and alert. This is not a passive posture. It describes someone who understands that there is an enemy and refuses to be careless about the battle.

I don't want to be one of those people who can be devoured. Or even chewed on a little. May it never be that I am found sleeping when I should be fighting. The enemy is constantly looking for opportunities to gain influence, create confusion, weaken faith, and discourage believers from walking in what God has called them to do. Many times, his greatest advantage is not his power—it is our lack of awareness. An enemy who remains unnoticed can advance without resistance. That is why spiritual alertness matters.

I want to be watchful and discerning of the things happening around me. I want to recognize when something is more than a natural circumstance and requires a spiritual response. I want to be positioned to interfere with hell's plans of attack rather than discovering later that I ignored the warning signs.
The builders on Nehemiah's wall did not stop building because there was an enemy. Neither did they ignore the enemy because they had a task to complete. They learned how to do both at the same time: build the wall and carry the weapon. That is the balance we need as believers.

We continue serving. We continue loving people. We continue building what God has called us to build. But we do it with our spiritual weapons ready, our hearts awake, and our eyes open. Because the work of God will always face opposition from the enemy, and those who are building must also be prepared to fight.

**VEX AND SMITE**

When Israel was wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, they encountered the Midianites. These people became a stumbling block to Israel, leading them into idolatry and sexual immorality. As Moses was preparing the nation to move forward into the Promised Land, he gave them instructions concerning their enemy:

*Numbers 25:17 — Vex the Midianites, and smite them.*

I love these words!

They communicate action. They are not passive words. They do not describe simply surviving an attack or enduring opposition. They describe an intentional response against an enemy that is attempting to bring destruction. Let's look a little closer at these words.

Vex (Strong's 6887) — to bind, be narrow, be in distress, make narrow, cause distress, besiege, be straitened, be bound; to show hostility toward, treat with enmity, harass, harm, damage.

Vex (dictionary) — to bring trouble, distress, or agitation; to irritate, annoy, or provoke.

Smite (Strong's 5221) — to strike, smite, hit, beat, slay, kill, or inflict injury.

Now think about these definitions in the context of spiritual warfare. When the enemy attacks, we are not called to simply endure his activity and hope things improve. We have been given authority to push back against the kingdom of darkness.

We vex the enemy by:

- Causing distress to his plans.
- Treating him as an enemy rather than tolerating his influence.
- Harassing and damaging the works of darkness.
- Bringing trouble to the strategies he has designed against people.
- Disrupting his attempts to deceive, oppress, and destroy.
- Inflicting damage against his kingdom through the advancement of God's kingdom.

It is a no-holds-barred, MMA-style spiritual smackdown. Sounds exciting, doesn't it? But how do we actually do this? Here are a few practical ways we engage the enemy's kingdom:

- Share the gospel regularly with those who are lost and rescue people from his kingdom. Every person who comes to Christ represents a defeat for the kingdom of darkness.
- Disciple new believers and help them become devoted followers of Jesus. It is not enough to see people saved; we must help them become established, mature, and equipped to continue advancing the kingdom.
- Pray for people who are hurting, bound, or in need, believing God for supernatural intervention. Every answer to prayer reveals the goodness and power of God.
- Cast out demons. Of course! Jesus demonstrated this ministry, and He gave His followers authority over the powers of darkness.

- Develop a vibrant prayer life. Prayer is not simply preparation for warfare—it is one of the primary ways we engage in it. (More on this later.)

One of the dangers of religious routine is that we can lose sight of the spiritual realities behind what we are doing. We can become so familiar with Christian language that we forget what is actually at stake:

- There is a real hell.
- Real people are headed there without Christ.
- The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only answer to humanity's greatest problem.
- We have been entrusted with this message.
- One day we will give an account for how faithfully we carried that responsibility.

When these truths become real to us, they should stir something deep within us—a sense of urgency to share the gospel and a holy determination to confront the works of darkness.

The kingdom of God does not advance through passive believers who simply hope things get better. It advances through people who understand the authority they have been given and are willing to use it.

It is okay to be bold. It is okay to be passionate. It is okay to be aggressive in obedience to God. I do not remember any Scripture that condemns someone for being too bold in their service to the Lord. Throughout Scripture, we see people who were moved by a holy passion for God and His purposes.

We should be grieved by the deception that keeps people bound. We should be angered by the destruction the enemy brings into people's lives. We should be moved to action when we see the effects of darkness in our world.
It is not hatred toward people—it is hatred toward the enemy who deceives, enslaves, and destroys.

So yes…It's okay to vex and smite.

Now, regarding that vibrant prayer life thing…

One of the things I've noticed, both in my own life and in the lives of others, is a hesitation to become aggressive in prayer. There seems to be an underlying assumption that for prayer to be holy, acceptable, and pleasing to God, it must always be quiet, gentle, and restrained. While there is certainly a place for quietness and intimacy with God, I believe this mindset has often been shaped more by tradition and cultural expectations than by Scripture.

When we look at the Bible, we find something very different.

The Psalms are filled with examples of people pouring out their hearts before God with raw emotion. David did not approach God with carefully edited, polite prayers that concealed his struggles. He brought his fear, frustration, anger, desperation, and longing before the Lord. You can almost hear the anguish in his words. These were not casual prayers from someone who was mildly interested in seeing God move. These were cries from people who desperately needed God to intervene.

Consider these verses:

*The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. Psalm 34:17*

*I will cry out to God Most High, to God who performs all things for me. Psalm 57:2*

*In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, and my cry came before Him, even to His ears. Psalm 18:6*

I have a difficult time imagining that these were quiet, emotionless prayers. These were desperate cries from people who understood that their situation required divine intervention.

And this is not just an Old Testament concept. Jesus Himself described the advancement of God's kingdom in this way:

*And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. Matthew 11:12*

That verse stirs something within me. It awakens a holy boldness and a desire to be fully engaged in the purposes of God. It makes me want to pray prayers that actually matter. Prayers that move beyond religious routine and become a genuine pursuit of God's will being accomplished on the earth.

I can think of no Scripture that condemns a believer for having a passionate prayer life or for expecting God to answer. In fact, Scripture encourages the opposite:

Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Romans 12:11

That word *fervent* is a powerful word. It means to boil, to be hot, to be full of heat. Go do a quick experiment. Fill a pot with water and put it on the stove at the highest setting. As that water begins to boil, what happens?

Is it quiet?
Is it calm and motionless?
Is it gentle and barely noticeable?

Absolutely not.

The water begins to move. It bubbles. It churns. It makes noise. Eventually, it spills over the top of the pot because the heat inside has produced visible activity on the outside. That is the picture Paul gives us when he tells us to be fervent in spirit.

Jesus is not threatened by our passion for Him. He is not uncomfortable with wholehearted pursuit. He is not looking for people who carefully manage their spiritual intensity so they never appear too excited, too committed, or too radical. He is pleased when His people pursue Him with everything they have. In fact, Jesus reserves some of His strongest warnings for the opposite condition — lukewarmness.

*So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Revelation 3:16*

The question we need to ask ourselves is this: Have we allowed our passion for God to be restrained by fear of what others think? Have we lowered the volume of our devotion because we were uncomfortable standing out? Have we whispered prayers that, deep inside, we wanted to shout because our hearts were burning with a desire to see God move?

Let me say this clearly: it is for freedom that Christ has set us free. We were not delivered from bondage so that we could become enslaved to the expectations, opinions, and traditions of other people.

Now, this does not mean we become obnoxious, disruptive, or disrespectful. Spiritual passion does not give us permission to disregard wisdom, love, or honor. But it does mean we refuse to quench the work of the Holy Spirit in us simply because someone else is uncomfortable with our devotion.

This is part of the warfare.

One of the battles we must fight is overcoming the fear of man and the desire for approval. The enemy would love nothing more than to silence believers by convincing them to shrink back, tone it down, and avoid anything that might make them appear different. But we cannot live our lives trying to keep everyone else comfortable. No matter what you do, somebody will eventually misunderstand you, criticize you, or be disappointed in you. I have always said this: If somebody is going to be disappointed, it's not going to be Jesus.

Live for His pleasure.

Follow His leading.

Pursue His kingdom.

Whether that means quietness in His presence or a bold, passionate cry of faith — do not allow anyone or anything to quench what God has placed inside of you.

This is part of the battle.

And this is part of the victory**.**